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STUDIES

IN

JOHN'S GOSPEL:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST'S DEITY.

BY

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CONTENTS.

THE PROLOGUE ----- 7

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” JOHN 1:1.

THE WORD MADE FLESH, OR JESUS CHRIST THE
SON OF GOD ----- 11

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” JOHN 1:14.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES: THE WAY THEY FOUND
CHRIST ----- 26

“And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.” JOHN 1:36, 37.

THE FIRST MIRACLE, OR THE WEDDING AT CANA--- 43

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.” JOHN 2:11.

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS, OR THE DOCTRINE OF RE-
GENERATION ----- 59

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” JOHN 3:3.

CHRIST'S DEFINITION OF WORSHIP: HIS SERMON AT
JACOB'S WELL ----- 75

“God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” JOHN 4:24.

THE FIVE THOUSAND FED	88
"And they filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves." JOHN 6:13.	
CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.....	102
"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life." JOHN 6:35.	
CHRIST AT THE FEAST.....	119
"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." JOHN 7:37.	
CHRIST AND THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD	136
"Before Abraham was, I AM." JOHN 8:58.	
CHRIST AND THE BLIND MAN, OR THE TESTIMONY OF EXPERIENCE.....	148
"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." JOHN 9:25.	
CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD	162
"I am the Good Shepherd." JOHN 10:11.	
DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS.....	178
"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life." JOHN 11:25.	
CHRIST AND THE SEEKING GREEKS	193
"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast; the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." JOHN 12:20, 21.	
JESUS TEACHING HUMILITY BY WASHING HIS DIS- CIPLES' FEET	207
"Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." JOHN 13:13, 14.	
CHRIST COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES	220
"Let not your heart be troubled." JOHN 14:1.	

CHRIST THE TRUE VINE	234
"I am the Vine, ye are the branches." JOHN 15:5.	
THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	245
"He shall glorify Me." JOHN 16:14.	
CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER	259
"Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven." JOHN 17:1.	
CHRIST BETRAYED BY JUDAS	274
"Judas who betrayed him." JOHN 18:2.	
CHRIST BEFORE PILATE	286
"Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified."	
JOHN 19:16.	
THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST	302
"And He, bearing His cross, went forth." JOHN 19:17.	
CHRIST RISEN	316
"Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen	
the Lord." JOHN 20:18.	
THE RISEN CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES	333
"This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his	
disciples after that he was risen from the dead," JOHN 21:14.	

THE PROLOGUE.

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD."—*John 1:1.*

LIKE the first book of the Old Testament, this last Gospel of the New Testament begins with a preface. The two introductions are marvellously alike. They both make God the frontispiece of the book. Both books narrate the works of God. In Genesis God works as Creator; in this last Gospel God works as Redeemer.

The preface of a book prepares the reader for the perusal of the book. This is especially true of the preface to the Gospel according to John. It outlines the book and strikes its keynote. Like the entire Gospel, it is distinctively Johannean; just as the writings of Paul are distinctively Pauline. It is full of deep and grand things, such as the intuitive and contemplative nature of the apostle of love would both grasp and enjoy. While the truths and facts narrated are deep, the expression of these is simple and crystalline and beautiful. There is no mistaking what the writer says. The difficulty is to make the clearly stated truths and facts living realities in the soul. John's writings are like those deep goblet-lakes which the mountains hold up to the gaze of the world six and eight thousand feet in the air. The waters in these lakes are as clear as dewdrops, but it takes a long line to fathom their depths. No mental plummet has ever touched the bottom of the living waters of truth in this Johannean lake.

In studying the introduction which John gives Jesus Christ we notice that it differs from the introductions of Jesus Christ which the writers of the other Gospels give their Master. It differs from these because John had a different object from that which Matthew and Luke and Mark had. His Gospel was intended to serve the same Christ, but it was intended to serve him in a different way. It was intended to exalt a different aspect of the person of Christ.

John's introduction accords with his Gospel, just as their introductions accord with their Gospels. We need the fourfold-story of the Christ which the evangelists give us, and we cannot but admire the consistency of each Gospel with itself.

Let us set before our minds the purpose of each Gospel and the consistent way Christ is introduced by each.

Matthew's Gospel is "the gospel of the kingdom." He sets forth the Christ as the long-looked-for King of the Jews. It was written in Hebrew and abounds in quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures. When the genealogy of Christ is given and traced through the Hebrew Bible, he opens his Gospel with the thrilling story of the Magi who come from the far East to celebrate Christ's birth with precious gifts and to greet him as a King. They tell in Judæa the wonder of the blazing star and how they were guided. They find the royal manger and do homage to the Child-King. This chapter of Matthew which narrates the royal honors paid Jesus by the unknown Magi strikes

the key-note of the whole Gospel of Matthew, "the Gospel of the kingdom." The preface and the Gospel fit.

Mark sets the Christ forth as "the servant of God." The object of Mark's Gospel is to show the busy life which the Christ lived while on earth. Consequently it is broken and, as it were, abrupt and out of breath. It passes with marked rapidity from one scene to another, from one deed to another, and from one address to another. It does not take time to record a single incident attending the birth of Christ. It introduces him a full mature man, baptized by John, and inducted into that stupendous and awful ministry which ends with the cross. His first chapter, which introduces a busy man, strikes the key-note of his Gospel of "the servant of God." Preface and Gospel fit.

Luke's Gospel is "the Gospel of the humanity of Christ." In accordance with its mission, its first chapter is largely filled with human scenes. The genealogy is given and the story of his birth. The poverty of his parents is recorded. The story of the shepherds finding him in the feed-trough of the cattle is told. Christ entered the human world amid the lowest conditions of humanity. The opening chapter of Luke's Gospel relates this, and thus strikes the key-note of "the Gospel of Christ's humanity." Preface and Gospel fit.

The gospel of John is "THE GOSPEL OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST." It requires an introduction different from that given by the other Gospels. Accordingly John begins differently. He begins

his Gospel back of the history of the human race and beyond the beginning of the world ; just as he ends his book of Revelation beyond all historians and beyond the end of the world. In the very first words which flow from his pen he rings the changes on Christ's deity. These changes he keeps ringing to the very end. From first to last it is *deity*, DEITY, DEITY. The incidents which he gives, which are peculiar to his Gospel and which are omitted by the other evangelists, are incidents which are instinct with divinity. His Gospel was the last written. It was held back until the other Gospels had become fully known and until the world was filled with the discussions concerning the Christ. When the interest with regard to Christ was at its highest point it came forth with the highest views of Christ, and corrected current errors and illumined the other Gospels. It was a grand growth. It was a vast advance beyond anything that had ever been published. It freshened the Christ already revealed and gave point and fitness to the wonderful stories connected with his birth. Since Christ is God manifest in the flesh, it is fitting that the shepherds should be filled with wonder and the Magi with worship and the sky with flashing shechinah-fire and the angels with rapturous song. Here again preface and Gospel fit. There are no other conceivable words better suited for the opening of "the Gospel of the deity of the Christ" than these words: "IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD."

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL.

THE WORD MADE FLESH, OR JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD.

"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US."

John 1:14.

ADMIT that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and his character and words and works will weave themselves into a story that is perfectly unique. Divine words and divine works and a divine character require a divine person. This is what the apostle of love teaches, and with him this teaching is an intuition. This is the sum and substance of his "Gospel of spiritual insight." Admit the deity of Jesus Christ, and everything fits.

Can you explain the character of Christ apart from the deity of Christ? No. His character was not the product of his age. Like only can produce like. His age was carnal, wicked, narrow, selfish. He was spiritual and good and broad and unselfish. You might as well try to prove that the Alleghanies or the Catskills or the Rockies were piled up into mountains by the spades of the Italians who build our railroads, as try to establish that Jesus Christ was made out of the virtues of

his times. He was not from beneath, therefore he must have been from above.

In the Scripture before us the apostle John lays down and unfolds THREE PROPOSITIONS relative to the deity of his Master.

I. *Jesus Christ is God incarnated.*

The absolute divinity of Christ could not be stated with greater clearness in human language. It is stated so as to anticipate all the questions which an inquirer might put concerning it. It is stated, and it is guarded against error. The opening clauses of this Gospel are complete and climactic. They state truth, and they refute error. Individualize these clauses and see!

There is an error abroad "that the *Logos*, or Word, is not eternally pre-existent, but is a creation or emanation from God." That error is annihilated by the first phrase of this Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word." The term "beginning" puts Christ back of the existence of creation and of creatures. It makes him therefore "*The Uncreated.*" What is *The Uncreated* but *The Eternal*? .

There is an error abroad "that the Word was the development or manifestation of the unseen and infinite God, and as such had no distinct personality." That error is annihilated by the second phrase of this Gospel, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." This phrase makes a distinction between the Word and God, or to express ourselves differently, it gives the Word a personality, and the Father, who is called God, a

personality. The two persons fellowship and companionate as equal.

There is an error abroad "that Christ was a second or inferior God, a sub-deity, and as such subordinate in his essential nature to the Father." That error is annihilated in the third phrase of this Gospel, "And the Word was God." This statement is absolute and without the shadow of qualification. There is not a hint of any such thing as "a sub-deity." Whatever we may say as to the truth or untruth of what John affirms, there can be no dispute that he believed, and that he directly and fearlessly asserted, that Jesus Christ was God incarnated.

In treating of the deity of Christ the old divines used to ask this question and give this answer: "How do you prove that the Bible teaches that Christ was God?" "The Bible teaches that Christ was God in that it ascribes to him the names and attributes and works of God." You will find this question and answer in Fisher's and Erskine's Catechism. It seems to me that the old divines got their question and answer from the opening verses of John's Gospel. John ascribes to Jesus Christ these very things, the names of God, the attributes of God, and the works of God. He ascribes to him the names of God. He calls him *The Light*. This is a name of God: "God is light, and in him is no darkness." He ascribes to him the attributes of God. He ascribes to him personality and eternity. He dates his existence away back in the sublime solitudes before time began.

Christ, says John, ante-dated creation. He ascribes to him the works of God : " All things were made by him ; and without him was not anything made that was made." He ascribes creation to Christ. Now only God can create. It was his voice away back in the beginning that said, " Let there be light ; and there was light."

From these ascriptions you see how much must be read into the Incarnation. You see how great with meaning is the cradle-manger of Bethlehem. This babe who lies in the feed-trough is one with Him whose throne is fixed in the heavens. This infant, who is hardly a mother's armful, is He who fills immensity. This weeping infant is He whose voice is thunder and whose arm is omnipotent. This child, whose dormant powers will open through a long period of culture, is one with Him whose understanding is infinite. This child, to whom his mother's voice is the sweetest music, is one with Him who dwells for ever amid the praises of the universe. This babe, born but an hour ago, is He who existed from all eternity. This little creature is none other than the Creator. He made every flower that blooms, every tree that waves its arms in the storm, and every star that sparkles. It was His hand that buried the coal in strata and the oil in rivers. It was He who hid the precious gems among the rocks of earth. He created all things.

You ask me if I believe what John teaches concerning Christ as the incarnate God? I answer, I do; and I ask in return, Why should I not? You

respond, "It is so great a mystery. No one can understand it." The great objection urged against the incarnation of God in Christ is just this, "It is so great a mystery." But why should mystery be urged as an objection? The Bible does not deny its mystery. It is the first to assert it. Those who are unbelievers are not the originators of this idea of mystery. The Bible itself says, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." The Bible does not treat its mystery as an objection or as a reason for our want of faith in it. It takes for granted that God is able to do that which we are not able to comprehend. If we are to believe only that which is free from mystery, our faith must necessarily be narrowed to a very small compass. We cannot believe in ourselves, for we are a great mystery. Can you understand how that which you call your immortal soul can come and incarnate itself in your body? Do you understand the union between your soul and body? Have you ever seen it explained? Yet you believe it, and you act upon it as a fact. Do you understand the relation between sound and thought? Yet there is a relation, and you use it. You use sound-symbols which we call the letters of the alphabet, and through them put the invisible thoughts which are in your mind into words, and thus give them body and visibility and permanence. It is a wonderful mystery how the great world of invisible thought can find its way into visibility by means of a few simple letters of the alphabet. Yet it does and we believe it. What

greater wonder is it if the invisible God becomes manifest in the flesh? We are living in a world of mystery, and the reasons of things most familiar to us, and used by us, and relied upon by us, are known only to God. Our every-day life educates us and schools us for believing the grandest of all mysteries, THE INCARNATION OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST.

Let us set forth some of the reasons for believing what John puts in the forefront of his gospel, namely: The divinity of Jesus; or the incarnation of God in Christ. I believe it:

(a.) *Because I find the manifold assertion of it in the Scriptures.* Assertions like these are multiplied: "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "He is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person.

(b.) *Because it explains the mystery of his wonderful life.* Without the incarnation, without the doctrine of his divinity, his life would be the greatest of all mysteries. John says, "He dwelt among us," and his divine dwelling cannot be explained if you deny his divinity. Let me give a simple statement of the case. Here is one obscurely born. He has been reared in humble circumstances. He has nothing which the world calls power. He starts in absolute poverty. He founds a religion. He makes demands for the whole heart, time, talents, means of men. The inducements which he offers men to join him are tribulation, persecution, and hard work. Laboring under these disadvan-

tages, by the mere force of his teachings and his holy life he gathers a multitude of followers. He charms the fishermen from the lakes, the soldiers from the standard, the publican from his money tables, the physician from his practice, the scholarly student from the feet of his master, the honorable counsellor from his deliberations, the ruler from pride or luxury. The chief priests conspire against him, but he is held dearer than ever. They kill him, but his disciples rally and his cause goes on. They seal his tomb, but in some way he leaves it while the Roman guard is around it. He is seen alive by half a thousand people at one time. Having proven his resurrection, he rises visibly to heaven and to God. But in ascending he leaves behind him a church which to-day exists after eighteen centuries and is one of the mightiest forces on earth. You ask me to believe that that man was a mere man. Make him a mere man, and I do not understand his life. It is a mystery which staggers me. But I have not mentioned all that is worthy of mention in his life. He was like a Creator among his works. While here everything obeyed him, the wind, the sea, the fishes, the trees. He cured all diseases by the word of his mouth. At his bidding the very dead arose to life. You ask me to believe that he was a mere man. Say that he was God incarnate, and these works are easily understood.

But say some, "He was a good man, and God honored him by working through him. If he had been a bad man he could not have done such things or

have lived this life. God blessed him with power, just as he blessed Moses and Elijah, who wrought miracles." Neither Moses nor Elijah claimed to be God; but Jesus did. The Jews took up stones to stone him because he claimed equality with the Father. Could a good man go through life proclaiming a lie? Either Christ was God as he claimed to be, or he was not. There is no middle position. He was God, or else he was an impostor. Unbeliever, you laugh at the mystery of the incarnation, now solve the mystery of Christ's life without the incarnation. Your mystery is greater, for it is this: Either a good man has spoken falsehood, or an impostor has cheated the world and executed the deeds of a God. To me it is easier to accept of the mystery of Christ's birth, and in it see a simple and plain explanation of the divinity of his wonderful life.

II. *Christ does not lack evidence to establish that he is the incarnate God, although the world greets him with rejection.*

John, having declared who Christ was, proceeds at once to tell us that his true character was not recognized by men, although he lived among them. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Although rejected, he seeks to set before us the fact that there was no reason for his rejection. There was abundant evidence to establish his divine identity. What evidence was there?

(a.) *There was the testimony of his own divine life.*

His works can be explained only by his deity. These identify him as the Son of God, by whom

all things in the beginning were created. These discover to us that in him we have the great Creator once more in the midst of his own works. Let me resort to an illustration. When Ulysses returned home to Ithaca with fond anticipations, his family did not recognize him. Even his wife denied her husband, so changed was he by an absence of twenty years and by the exposures of war. It was thus true of the vexed and astonished Greek as of a nobler King, that he came unto his own and his own received him not. In this painful position of affairs he called for a bow which he had left at home when he embarked for the siege of Troy. With characteristic sagacity he saw how a bow so stout and tough that no one but he could draw it might be made to bear witness on his behalf. He seized it, and to their surprise and joy it yielded to his strong arm like a green wand lopped from a willow-tree. He bent it till the bow-string touched his ear. His wife now saw that he was her long-lost and long-mourned husband, and she threw herself with confidence into his arms. Like Ulysses, if I may compare small things with great, our Lord gave such proof of his divinity when he was a stranger in the midst of his own creation. He bent the stubborn laws of nature, which only God can bend. He proved that he was the heavenly Creator by his mastery over creation. Christ has Godlike deeds and a divine life as a witness to his divine identity.

(b.) *There was the testimony of prophecy.*

Under this head comes the testimony of John the Baptist. He bore witness to Christ. He was the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets, and as such represented them. In the name of all who preceded him he hands the prophetic office over to Jesus. His voice was the recapitulation and completion of the whole line of prophets. John was a wonderful witness. So wonderful was he that many thought that he was great enough to be the Messiah. It was necessary for him to say, "I am not the Christ." Christ had the testimony of this great and good prophet.

(c.) *There was the testimony of his disciples.*

They saw the outflashing of his inherent divinity in the mount of Transfiguration. This is their testimony: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." His divinity is a historical fact, and it is established by the laws which govern human evidence. It is established just as the genius of Napoleon is established. There is as good reason to doubt the one as to doubt the other. They are both established by the testimony of eye-witnesses. The disciples of Christ's day say, "He dwelt among us, and we saw him and knew who he was and what he was."

(d.) *There was, and there is still, the testimony of the experience of his followers.*

The witnesses of the divinity of Christ are not all dead. There is a present testimony. There are living witnesses. There are men to-day who can say, "Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth and life and light, because of his fulness have all

we received." There are men walking the streets of New York who are full of Godlike purposes and feelings and virtues, and who bear the likeness of God and who are partakers of the divine nature. Their testimony is, "All this came to us from the fulness of Christ." Christ could not give divine things if he were not divine. The argument of experience is a mighty argument. Giving implies having. Ask the flowers how they know that the sun has life and beauty. They reply, "He gives us life and beauty." Can you refute that argument? Can you successfully deny that the sun has life and beauty? If you did deny it, would anybody believe you so long as the flowers receive life and beauty from the sun? Account for the divine likeness and the divine things which Christians receive from Christ if Christ be not divine. "Of his fulness have all we received."

III. *Christ as the incarnate God bestows a fulness of blessing upon all who by faith receive him as such.*

(a.) *He gives to believers the most satisfactory revelation of God and of truth.*

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." He is to the Father what words are to thought. Words are thoughts in visible form. He is called *the Word* because he is God in visible form—"God manifest in the flesh." When Thomas said to him, "Lord, show us the Father and it will suffice us," He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In accord with all this is the claim which he makes for him-

self when he says, "I am the Light of the world." All revelation has come through him. He was in the Theophanies of the Old Testament. It was with him that Enoch and Noah walked. It was he who was with Moses, and it was for his sake that Moses suffered. Now this does not interfere with the function and work of the Holy Spirit, for it is the things of Christ which the Spirit takes and shows unto men. It is into Christ's truth that the Spirit leads us. Christ embodies God in himself; when therefore he reveals himself he reveals God. Christ embodies truth; he is the Truth: when he reveals himself he reveals truth. There is not an atom of truth on the earth, nor a ray of divine light in the soul of man, but can be traced by the omniscient Eye back to Christ. The light of the Old Testament! He is the source of that. The light of the New Testament! He is the source of that. The light that flickers in the darkness of heathendom! He is the source of that. The missionaries tell us of a man in the midst of heathen darkness who accepted of Christ the first time he heard Christ preached. The man said, "Why I have been believing in him for years, but I did not know how to name him." He told them how he had been convicted of sin, how he had been led to renounce all trust in himself, and how he cried to the One who made him, asking Him to send some one to save him. He told them that he felt sure that in some way his Maker would, and he was just resting in that trust. That man never reasoned himself up into that trust. His light came

from Christ, although he did not know how to name him. The knowledge of an unknown Christ came to him in lines he knew not.

We who know Christ know God. We know how God loves and forgives and acts. We know what he expects from us and how he would have us live. We know the things which he has provided for his own.

(b.) *He gives to believers the adoption of sons.*

“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” He fills them with his filial spirit and transforms them into his likeness. Sons of God! We know what that term carries with it. It carries with it the fellowship of God’s household, fellowship with Jesus the elder Brother, fellowship with the saints of the past and of the future. It means Abraham’s bosom and the ministry of the angels. It means the mansions and the harps of gold and the unfading crowns. It means the river of life and the tree of life. According to the Scriptures sonship carries with it heirship. “If sons, then we are heirs.” Heirs of what? Let the Bible answer. “Heirs of the grace of God.” “Heirs of salvation.” “Heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to those who love him.” “Heirs of the riches of the glory of the inheritance of the saints.” Is this all? No, not all. The most wonderful part of the heritage of sonship yet remains to be spoken. The Bible says that we are “heirs of God.” To be heirs of this earth would be much; to be heirs of heaven would be a great deal more; but to be heirs of

God, to have him as our portion, is incomparable beyond all. But this is our privilege. The Heavenly Father belongs to us. This is a wonderful fact, but it is a fact. How much it means it will take eternity to explain.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. *Open your heart to the great things predicated of Christ in this wonderful Gospel.*

What grandeur they give the cause of Christ! What confidence they should give us in its ultimate success! What dignity they give to Christian faith! What glory they put upon Christ himself! The man who unreservedly accepts of these teachings of John concerning Jesus Christ will be on fire with Christian enthusiasm and will be absolute in his devotion to Christ and to his church. He will give Christ the throne of his soul. He will see him as the Lord of the universe, and he will judge everything and appreciate everything from its relation to Christ.

2. *Attach due importance to the fact that Christ is the incarnate God.*

It is a fundamental fact and doctrine. If we look upon Christian doctrine as constituting an arch, the doctrine of the incarnation is the keystone of the arch. When it falls every other doctrine falls with it. If Christ be not the Son of God, the gospel story is a baseless myth. If Christ be not the Son of God, Christendom is a fiction.

3. *Seek a re-incarnation of Christ in yourself.*

Paul tells us that this is the will of God con-

cerning us. God wants the life of Jesus to be made manifest in our mortal flesh, just as the life of God was made manifest in Christ. If we are Christ's people we want what God wants. We want God to make us vessels meet for this great purpose. We would have our characters so pure and so transparent that his glorious life might shine through them, just as light shines through a spotless crystal. We would have such a fulness of Christ's indwelling that we might be able to say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ who liveth in me."

THE FIRST DISCIPLES: THE WAY THEY FOUND CHRIST.

"AND LOOKING UPON JESUS AS HE WALKED, HE SAITH, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD! AND THE TWO DISCIPLES HEARD HIM SPEAK, AND THEY FOLLOWED JESUS."—*John* 1:36, 37.

THE first part of this magnificent chapter deals with the origin of Jesus Christ; the last part deals with the origin of the Christian Church. It tells us who were the first to rally around Jesus, accept his doctrines, and consecrate themselves irrevocably to his cause. There were five such men: John and Andrew and Peter and Philip and Nathanael. When we remember what the church of God is and the place which it has always had in the divine plan, we can see the importance of this history which gives us the origin of the church. This page may seem a quiet one, but the times which it chronicles are stirring times. These incidents related may seem to be uneventful things in the private lives of lowly persons, but they are none other than the incidents towards which all history has been working. These private men are destined to become public actors. There is a race service before them and a world-wide fame.

Their true life begins on the day they find Jesus and ally themselves with him and his future. This is the case with every immortal soul. All life lived apart from God is nothing but a waste. The greatness of a man begins when Christ

marches into his being and becomes incarnate in his life. The incoming of Christ into the life of man, that is the one thing above all things; that carries in it a future as bright as the golden day which opens in splendor. When Christ takes possession of a man he fills him with his light and makes him a luminary in the world. See what he does here. He lifts rough and uncouth fishermen from their fishing-boats into the apostleship and places them upon the thrones of thought which rule humanity.

We need this page of history with these five names. We need it as a revelation of the growth of the Christian Church and as a standing argument to the divinity of the gospel. We argue the divinity of the gospel from the weakness and lowliness of its early advocates. It progresses despite their lowliness and weakness. It shows what it is by what it does for them. Behold what they are when it finds them! Behold what they are when it leaves them! This is the way to understand what the gospel is and what it can do.

Such a history as this, when linked with the advancing history of the church and with the prophecies which picture the final perfection of the church, creates great expectations for the church and strengthens our faith in the final issue of the cause of Christ. There is no exercise so stimulating to the child of God as running in thought through the successive stages of the growth and advancement of the church. This is the picture which opens to his soul: On the first

day Jesus stands alone; on the second day two disciples join him; as the days follow, a third disciple is added, and a fourth disciple, and then a fifth disciple. First in the history of the Christian Church we read of two, then of five, then of twelve, then of seventy, then of one hundred and twenty, then of five hundred, then of one hundred forty-and-four thousand, and then of ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, and finally of the multitudes and multitudes which no man can number, gathered from every people and kindred and tongue and nation, all singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." Truly the pathway of the Christian Church, as traced through the Gospel and Apocalypse of John, the beloved disciple, the leader of these five in discipleship, is a pathway of light and triumph which leads to perfection and eternal glory. We cannot but praise God that we are part of the Christian Church which is sweeping up the steeps of light to its heavenly destiny. But let us not give way to rapture. Let us not forget that our study is the first chapter of John's Gospel, not the last chapter of John's Apocalypse.

In this chapter we are told that five disciples followed Christ, and they were his first disciples, the foundation of the Christian Church. It is with these five disciples, with Jesus in their midst, that we wish to deal. In spending our time with them the chief thing we wish to reach is this: the different ways in which they were brought to Christ.

When we see these different ways we shall see the different avenues that are opened to us on every hand for effective work for Christ, and the many agencies that can be wheeled into gospel service and the varied lines upon which the multitudes may come to Christ.

There are twelve gates opening into the heavenly city, and these gates evenly face all points of the compass and make it possible that men may come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God.

But let us take up the story of the five.

1. *The first and second disciples were won to Christ by the ministry of John the Baptist. They were converted by a sermon.*

The true sermon is a converting power. It is a God-ordained agency for swaying the souls of men and centring them in Christ. Does God use the sermon in converting men, then let us expect and look for returns from every gospel sermon that issues from the pulpit. Let us make the sermon strong by our prayer and by our desire and by our faith. The sermon should not be considered the product of one man; in the pulpit at least it should never be allowed to go out among souls as a mere one-man power; it should be sent out among immortal souls to work for Christ filled with all the power of the assembled congregation.

I need not spend time in lauding John the Baptist, the minister who won the first converts to Christ. He was a man who hid himself behind

Christ. Christ was seen, not John the Baptist. He was a man who preached Christ and not self. This made him a man of electric power. The substance of his sermon which won the first converts to Jesus is given here in one little sentence. That sentence is this, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" The Baptist was the son of a priest, and he preached Christ as the anti-type of the lamb offered in daily sacrifice. Everybody understood the metaphor. He preached the cross. It was in his ministry as it was in Paul's: Christ crucified was the power of God and the wisdom of God to every one that believeth. It is the cross that convicts men of sin. It is the cross that gives men a melting exhibition of the infinite love of God. It is the sermon with the cross in it that is the soul-converting sermon. Thus it was in the beginning, and shall ever continue to be. Men to-day eliminate the sacrificial death of Christ from their preaching and then wonder why souls are not converted. It would be a wonder if souls were converted.

But who were these two disciples converted to Christ by the sermon of the Baptist? They were John, the disciple of love, and Andrew. John, the embodiment of love, leads the world in the rally around Christ, and it is fitting that he should. It is fitting that love should have the preëminence. It is fitting that he who is last at the cross with Christ should be first with Christ on the banks of the Jordan, should feel the power of the first gos-

pel sermon, and should witness the first evidence of Christ's deity: the cleft sky, the descending dove, and the voice of the Father, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

There is one fact which stands out in great boldness connected with the conversion of John, the first disciple of Jesus; it is a fact for us all. It is this, namely, *The first views which a Christian receives of Christ are the views that abide with him and control him.*

John saw Christ as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, and this view of Christ always held the preëminence in his life. Christ the sacrifice for sin was his burning vision. Read his Epistles, in which he breathes his inner self and in which he speaks out his deepest convictions. It would seem as though he could speak of nothing else but the blood which cleanseth from all sin and the sacrificial death and great propitiation. Turn to the Apocalypse, and there you find that thirty times and more he sets Christ forth as "the Lamb of God." These writings were the productions of his old age, and they reveal that his first views of Christ were the views that lived with him and that controlled his thinking.

This same fact, illustrated in John, is illustrated in Paul. His first vision of Christ gave character to his after life and faith. On the way to Damascus two things were burned into Paul's consciousness, namely, Christ's deity and Christ's oneness with his people. The glory-light which shone around Paul and made him blind was the insignia of deity,

the flashing of divine glory itself, and the words of Christ, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," were the evidence of how closely united Christ is to his people. He is so closely related that suffering inflicted upon them is treated as suffering inflicted upon him. Now these two facts were always with Paul: Christ is God; Christ and his people are one. He never tired proclaiming and illustrating these two facts. It was he who coined the phrases concerning Christ: "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" and, "He was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." It was he who likened Christ to the head and the church to the body. Thus intimate did he picture the oneness between Christ and Christians. Brethren, it is well that our first visions of Christ do sway our after-life, and it is well that Christians have different views of Christ. The result is good. Each Christian emphasizes and holds aloft some special truth and fact, and when all are added together we have in Christians themselves the sum of all truth and the practical exhibition of all truth.

2. The third disciple was won to Christ by family influence.

The third disciple was Simon Peter. He was brought to Christ by his brother Andrew. Andrew made it his business to go after him and tell him his Christian experience and invite him to Christ. Peter was Andrew's gift to the church, and the gift was a magnificent one. It was worth living a lifetime to bring Peter to Christ. His

conversion meant the day of Pentecost with its sermon which converted three thousand. It meant the heroic protest before the Council which revealed to the rulers of the land that the spirit of Christ had perpetuated itself in the souls of his disciples. It meant the conversion of Cornelius and the fearless opening of the gates of the church to the incoming of the vast Gentile world. It meant also two precious epistles which are caskets full of spiritual gems.

Andrew's biography teaches us that we may live in the greatness of others; for think you not that God will reckon unto him part of Pentecost and part of the glory of the incoming of the Gentiles? He brought Peter: will not God give him a share in Peter's reward? Naomi lives in Ruth, and shares her happiness. Monica lives in Augustine, and shares part of the fame of her illustrious son. Do you not believe that that unknown monk who in the German cloister laid his hand on Martin Luther's shoulder and pointed him to the unknown Bible, will have some part of the reward of that herald of the open page in the day when God rewards according to our deeds? Do you not believe that Susannah Wesley—herself not a singer, herself not a preacher—who taught the young Charles his song and the young John his message, will receive at the hands of God in the day of days according to the mighty working of Methodism in its stupendous and glorious march? Do you not believe that that unheralded and almost forgotten preacher who leaned over his desk

and shot his loving message into the listening ears of young Charles Spurgeon will have some part in the great reward which the mightiest Englishman of our age shall certainly receive? God be praised, the reward which comes to us for the good that we do counts up like compound interest.

The biography of Andrew teaches us that relationship affords us a sphere for Christian work, and imposes upon us the responsibility for the salvation of our kindred, that is, in so far as the salvation of the soul can repose upon man. When Andrew found Christ for himself, there was a voice within which said, "*You must find Peter and bring him to Christ.*" There is a voice within you which says, "*You must find your kindred and bring them to Christ.*" No man should be before you in the ministry of the gospel to your own home. There is no reason why faith should not have a succession in the family just as surely as unbelief has. It will if we are true to our Christian faith in our family life. Be a Jochebed, and your son will be a Moses. Be a Naomi, and your daughter-in-law will be a Ruth. Be a Lois, and your grandson will be a Timothy. Be an Andrew, and your brother will be a Peter.

We found a special fact in the conversion of John; is there not also a special fact in the conversion of Peter? Yes; it is this: *When we find Christ he sets before us our defects and also our possibilities.*

The story here tells us that when Christ first

met Peter, *he changed his name*; and in this new name he both set before him that in which he was lacking and that which it was possible for him to attain. These are the words of Christ: "When Jesus beheld him he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas, i. e., Peter, which by interpretation means a stone or rock." The rock is the emblem of firmness. This virtue Peter lacked. He was a man of courage, but he needed firmness to give his courage constancy. At the very first meeting Christ held up to him his defect. Thus it is. When souls come to Christ he makes them feel their missing qualities and lacking attributes. In his presence their emptiness is set off by his fulness. But not only did Christ reveal Peter's defects; by the name which he gave him he set before him the type of character which he, under discipline and culture, could reach. By the new name which he gave him he told him that he could become a pillar in the temple of God. Such a pillar he did become.

Christ was not mistaken in him. He saw his future. He saw the attributes which would mark his after days: swift decisiveness, fire and manliness, courage and firmness. We learn from Peter that our Christian life has its hereafter. We climb up to higher things upon our own experiences. We climb up and up and still up, until at last we reach complete likeness to Christ himself. Christ holds our perfection in himself, just as the tree holds the perfection of the spring bud on its way to fruit. John and Andrew and Peter and Philip

and Bartholomew are now the perfect and transfigured image of Jesus Christ, and we shall be the same when we join them in their heaven-life.

3. *The fourth disciple was won to Christ by Christ's own personal agency.*

The fourth disciple was Philip. Christ himself went after Philip. He knew where he was, and he had a mission for him. No details are given of his conversion; all that we are told is this: Christ said to him, "Follow me!" By two little words he changed his career and set before him his future Christian life. The Christian life consists in *following Christ*, and this is what Christ told Philip. The Christian should follow Christ in deeds and in graces and in sacrifices. The Christian should reproduce Christ's example and re-incarnate Christ's life.

4. *The fifth disciple was brought to Christ by the efforts of a converted neighbor.*

The fifth disciple was Nathanael, whom Bible critics identify with Bartholomew the apostle. Philip was a neighbor of Nathanael, and he went to him and told him the glad tidings of the Messiah found. His address throws light upon the blanks in this history. For example, we are not told the things which Jesus taught his disciples while he first associated with them; not a word of his discourses is recorded; but here, in the conviction of Philip, which he expresses to Nathanael, we have the fruit of these discourses. The fruit reveals the seed. The harvest declares the sowing. It was Philip's conviction that in Jesus of

Nazareth he had found the Messiah of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write. Christ, therefore, must have opened unto his first disciples the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets.

The story of Philip struck the prejudices of Nathanael, and he asked with incredulity, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip spent no time arguing with him. He was a man of few words and he appealed to experience. Talkative men are not the men who make the most converts. Talkative men in the church are not the men who do the most work. Philip's answer to prejudice was, "Come and see," i. e., *test things by experience*. You cannot out-argue prejudice. Facts—these are the only things that can master prejudice. These Christianity has, and it unrolls them before every honest Nathanael.

When Nathanael came to test the Messianic claims of Jesus, Jesus at once established his claims to the man's satisfaction. He read his thoughts for him; he exercised before him the attributes of deity, and the result was the quick response of Nathanael's faith which uttered itself in these words, "*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.*" The character of Nathanael is an exceptionally fine one. His conversion was quick, because he was very near the kingdom of God and because he was in search of Christ. He was the highest type of an Israelite, and Jesus saw in him a beautiful embodiment of the Hebrew religion. He called him an Israelite

in whom there was no guile. He was the fifteenth Psalm in flesh and blood, singing itself in the every-day deeds of a holy life.

As we found special points in the story of the conversion of John and of Peter, we find also a special point in the story of the conversion of Nathanael. It is this: *Christianity will bear testing.*

The Christian religion courts investigation: it is constantly throwing out the challenge, "Come and see." Christ framed this challenge the very first day he started upon his public career and the very first time he met with inquirers. Before he ever accepted the faith of a human soul, he said, "Come and see." What could be fairer than this? Christ does not want a blind trust, he wants an intelligent faith. He says to every man, "Test me." He asks the human race to scrutinize his character and his life. He submits his deity and his love to examination. He submits his religion with its fruits to a practical test. Come and see a dying world revived, a decrepit world regenerated. Come and see tenderness brought to the cell of the imprisoned felon and liberty to fettered slaves. Come and see the ignorant educated and the poor vested with civil liberty. Come and see great nations lifted from barbarism into the highest civilization. Come and see hospitals and orphanages rising in their permanent mercy beside the crumbling ruins of colossal amphitheatres that once reeked with human blood. Come and see dens of lust and tyranny transformed into sweet and

happy homes. Come and see Christ glorified in the world. And how is Christ glorified? He is glorified as the sun in the sky is glorified. The sun is glorified by being allowed to shine in its true strength. Sweep the clouds from the mighty vault and let the sun shine in its strength! Let its glinting shafts shoot through the wide world. Let them sparkle in the dewdrop and burn and glow in the beautiful colors of the flowers. Christ is glorified in the outcome of his life in our civilization and in his re-incarnation in his church. Come and see him in these. Come and see the magnificent acts in the one great drama continued through nineteen long centuries, all reproducing Christ in life, and establishing his truth and his love and his type of manhood. Come and see! This is the call which all of God's people are commissioned to sound out the universe over. And he who listens to the call, and like Nathanael draws near to Christ and Christianity with pure and candid motives, will with Nathanael lift up his voice and cry, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!"

DEDUCTIONS.

I. *Comparing the present progress of the Christian Church with the beginning of the Christian Church, there is great ground for hopefulness.*

Out of five have grown the teeming multitudes of to-day. Five men in the open air, five men with empty hands, five men with low ideals, five men without any culture, five men in need of years

of discipline, five men with carnal views of the kingdom of Christ — such was the beginning, such the opening of the first century. But compare the first century with the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century has vast cathedrals thrown up into the air in the name of Jesus, magnificent temples filled with the worshippers of Jesus, nations Christianized by the power of Jesus, institutions by the thousand the embodiment of the love and thoughtfulness of Jesus, a second divine Book, the New Testament, full of the biography of Jesus, an expurgated theology, full of clear views concerning the spirituality of the kingdom of Jesus. To-day the sun never sets upon the kingdom of Jesus. Christ in a large degree commands the intellect of the world and the wealth of the world and the power of the world; and yet the predictions concerning the church are only before us in the form of a spring bud. The full-bloomed flower is a thing of the future. How glorious the Christian Church will be when the flower is in full bloom! The present grandeur of Christianity is only the hiding of its inherent glory. Its present grandeur is in the world of religion what the rainbow is in the world of God's beauty. Half of the truths of Christianity have not been worked out into life and made practical and effective in the world.

Christianity as a revelation may be called complete; but Christianity as an applied force is only in the beginning of its career. There is a millennial glory about which the church in practical life

has not yet begun to dream. There are crowns and crowns in store for the head of Christ. There is a sweep for his sceptre in the future that will encircle a thousand times over the present sweep of that sceptre. There are anthems to be sung that never have been sung. His own prediction still awaits its complete fulfilment: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." There is wide ground for a grand play of hopefulness with regard to the church of Jesus Christ.

2. There are many ways to Christ.

There is only one way to eternal life, and Christ is that one way: but there are many ways to Christ. Some come to Christ through a sermon, like the two disciples of the Baptist, John and Andrew. Some come through the influence of the home-life, like Peter. Some are found directly by Christ himself, like Philip. Paul also came in this way. I might also say that Luther came in this way. He was first made serious by the striking down of his companion at his side in the twinkling of an eye by a bolt of lightning. That startling moment was the turning-point in Luther's life. Christ often speaks in some startling providence to the unconverted soul, and brings it to salvation by his own personal finding. Some come through the missionary work of their neighbor, like Nathanael. Search the experience of Christians, and you will find that men are brought to Christ in an almost inconceivable variety of ways. One says, "A text of Scripture found me." Another says, "A death-bed scene found me."

Another, "I was reached by a prayer." Another, "I was impressed by the holy character of my mother." Another, "I was converted by a sermon." The ways to Christ are as diverse as the different dispositions of men, and so earnest is God in love for the salvation of men. This is a comforting fact. It teaches us that if we are seeking Christ we shall find him. It teaches us not to worry because our experiences do not tally with those of our Christian brother. You had not the experience he had in coming to Christ: but no matter. Do not imagine therefore that you have not reached Christ. You are a different man. True, you were not converted as Paul was, but that does not prove that you have not been converted. You are not to fit yourself to Paul's method of conversion, you have only to fit yourself to the spirit of Paul's Christian life: if you have that, no matter how you got it. If you love Christ as he loved Christ, then it is an absolute certainty that you have found Christ and have been found of Christ. If you are living the Christian life, that is enough: that should fill you with assurance and peace.

3. *When a man responds to the call of Christian friends and comes to Jesus, he responds to the call of Jesus himself.*

Peter made no mistake in hearkening to Andrew: for Christ himself was with Andrew seeking him. This Scripture says to every soul, "Yield to the persuasion of your godly friends."

THE FIRST MIRACLE, OR THE WED-
DING AT CANA.

"THIS BEGINNING OF MIRACLES DID JESUS IN CANA OF GALILEE, AND MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY; AND HIS DISCIPLES BELIEVED ON HIM."—*John 2:11.*

JOHN closes his narrative of the first miracle with this retrospective remark: "This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." The right way to study the miracle is to begin with this retrospective remark. It helps us to a proper conception of its fulness, significance, and worth. John was an old man when he looked back upon the scenes of Cana and when he made this remark. It is therefore an inspired commentary upon the miracle. It is a testimony to its worth. It is a history of its influence.

(a.) *It teaches that the miracle revealed the divinity of Christ, and thus confirmed the faith of the new-made disciples.*

When the heavens are covered with clouds on a murky day, sometimes there is a rift in the clouds which lets through a momentary flash of the sunshine. That flash tells that the sun still exists in his glory back of the vapory veil. This miracle in Cana was like such a sunburst. It was the out-flashing of the divinity which dwelt in fulness in the unpretending form of Jesus Christ.

Divinity was within him. It was only veiled by the veil of flesh. It flashed out now in the form of a deed, just as in after time on the mountain of the Transfiguration it flashed out in the form of luminous splendor, which irradiated his humanity until his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was as white as the light. The miracle had an evidential value. Says the evangelist, "It manifested his glory." His divinity had always been a fact. For the past thirty years deity was in-folded by his humanity. It simply let itself be seen in this miracle, so that men might know it was there. An act was chosen which divine power only could perform and which no one could dispute, so that men might be led to see that the whole of Christ's life was divine. If he who turned water into wine was divine, then he who wept over Jerusalem was divine. The actor in both instances was the same person. If we see God in the *power* of Jesus, then we see God in the *compassion* of Jesus. If as a divine person Jesus teaches us how God works, then as a divine person Jesus teaches us how God thinks and forgives and loves. If Jesus Christ be divine in Cana of Galilee, he is divine in Nazareth and in Bethlehem and in Jerusalem and on Calvary. He is divine everywhere; for divinity is not a thing to be put on and off for occasions. For illustration the divinity of Christ has been likened to electricity and his miracles to lightning-bolts. Lightning-bolts only manifest the electric force which is everywhere, and which in these bolts becomes visible

for a moment. The electric force is made visible in a thunder-bolt that we may be convinced of its existence, and may be led to believe that it slumbers invisibly in the dewdrop and in the mist and in the cloud. Christ's divinity shows itself in the miracles of his life, that we may know his divinity and believe him to be divine in everything he does. John, in the opening of his Gospel, had spoken of Jesus as full of God's glory, and he now relates this miracle as the proof of his assertion: "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

(b.) *It teaches that the miracle stood in the forefront of Christ's ministry as a symbol or sign.*

The miracle was a talking act. It was a pictorial incident. It was a teaching symbol. This was the character of all the miracles. The miracles of Jesus not only relieved the wants of those for whom they were wrought; they expressed great truths, and thus instructed the world. You could take the miracles of Jesus and with them build up a system of theology in the form of acted symbols. Christ acted out, in the miracles which he wrought, the only theology worth possessing or worth systematizing. In changing water into wine, by a creative act of his will, Christ lifted water into a higher form of existence. He ennobled it. Was this the true sign and symbol of his mission on earth? If so, then the purport of the ministry of Christ on earth is to ennoble and to elevate humanity. He degrades nothing; he ennobles all. He makes the common precious;

he makes the secular sacred. He fills the world with joy and peace. He makes holy every relation of man. He puts his blessing upon all consecrated human fellowships.

(c.) *It teaches us that there is a development, a growth, in the miracles of our Lord.*

The miracle at Cana was only the beginning. Others followed. There was a growth in the miracles of Christ, a growth in degree of supernatural power and in range of influence. The study of the miracles is like the ascent of mountains, a going from higher to higher peaks. In our last study we found that the pathway of the church of Christ, from the first chapter of the Gospel of John to the last chapter of the Apocalypse of John, was one of light and growth. The history of the growth of the church of Christ is paralleled by the history of the growth of the miracles of Christ. The increase in the number of Christ's disciples is paralleled and matched by the turning of water into wine, by the mastery of the winds and waves and the control of the gigantic forces of nature, by the healing of the sick, by the giving of sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, by the cleansing of the leper, and by the culminating miracle of all, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. There is a matchless growth in the manifestation of the glory of Christ the miracle-worker. As we pass through the writings of John from the beginning, there is a vast stretch between the first out-shining of Christ's divinity at Cana and the full and perfect out-shining of his divinity

which finally lights up heaven. The progress of the glory of the church is more than matched by the progress of the glory of Christ. And this the pen of John sets forth.

To give order to our thoughts, we will study the narrative of the miracle and emphasize some deductions drawn therefrom.

I. THE NARRATIVE OF THE MIRACLE.

The narrative introduces Christ as acting out his own divine nature and revealing who he is. Up to this point his divine character had been attested chiefly by supernatural displays from heaven, such as the shechinah light which lit up the plains of Bethlehem, the heavenly anthem sung by the hymning band of angels, the strange and mystic star, the prophetic visions, the cleft sky over the baptismal water, and the audible voice of God sounding down the heavenly vault; now, by a deed of his own, he proves who he is. The miracle was wrought at a marriage festival. Who was married we know not. From the way in which Mary the mother of Jesus made herself at home, and put herself at the head of affairs, it is supposed that the parties were related to Mary. Christ was invited and he went. By this act he showed that the keynote of his religion was joy, and declared his desire to companionate with men in their pleasures. By this act he put honor upon marriage. The Jews made much of marriage. They looked upon it as an ordinance of God. They taught their children that God himself pro-

nounced the words of blessing over the cup at the union of Adam and Eve, and that the angel-choir sang the nuptial songs and rang the wedding-bells, and that Gabriel and Michael acted as groomsmen. They treated marriage as an Edenic blessing, and Jesus, by his presence at the marriage at Cana of Galilee, said that they were right. He taught that it was the duty of Christianity to capture and purify such occasions and to convert all social gatherings and feasts. It is a sin to give up the occasions of joy to the world. It is the mission of Christians to capture the pleasures of life for Christ. Christians should go to the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and they should be the ruling spirits there. It is the duty of the church to bring everything into the subjection of Christ, music, art, pleasure, all that pertains to a man and all that occupies his time.

The wine at the wedding feast gave out. This is the point of the story. Why it gave out nobody knows. The fact, however, was discovered by Mary, the mother of Jesus. Travellers tell us that to Orientals, exercising hospitality, such a lack was looked upon as a great mortification. So Mary looked upon it. She was a housekeeper and deeply sympathized with the host. Anxious to shield the family and prevent mortification, she said to Jesus, "They have no wine." Her remark was a woman's hint. Did she expect Jesus to come to the relief? The narrative can mean nothing else.

We are anxious to see how Jesus treats her

request. Does he do what she wishes? Yes. But he does not do it on account of her intercession, but because it is the appointment of his Father's will and a part of the divinely pre-arranged plan of his life. Mary, by her intercession, can get that which is in accordance with God's will; but so can the humblest of God's children. Mary had no prayer-power beyond that which we have. The reply of Jesus is contained in a single sentence: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." The reply contains in it two things, instruction and correction. The instruction is contained in the words, "Mine hour is not yet come." This places the miracle on the right basis. It teaches that everything in Christ's life was ordered by the Lord. It teaches his self-control. There was no haste in his life. There was nothing premature. He waited "thirty years" before he set forth his grand character, because his Father said so. It teaches that the Father's will was the only authority which Jesus recognized. The correction which Jesus administered is contained in the words, "What have I to do with thee?" Some read reproof into the term which Jesus used when he addressed his mother. He called her "Woman." "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" This is not correct. The term "woman" is not a harsh term. It is a term which recognizes the dignity of womankind. It is a title of respect. It is equivalent to the term "lady." That is a title of rank and dignity. Christ used the same term when he hung upon

the cross and with the tenderest of love remembered his mother. He said unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" The reproof of Christ is contained in the words, "What have I to do with thee?" i. e., "Interfere not. In my Messianic work you have no voice. I am no longer to be known as the son of Mary, but as the Son of God." This reproof was a kindness to Mary. Since she had no voice in the Messianic mission of Jesus, since the earth-view of the maternal relation must be dropped, it was kindness to teach and correct and guard Mary at the very start. Such a course was not only a kindness to Mary, it was a kindness to the Christian Church, in that it guarded it against ascribing fictitious attributes and mythical powers to Mary. In the very beginning Christ taught that Mariolatry was the worship of a fiction.

Having set forth the will and appointment of the Father as the basis of his action, Jesus wrought his miracle and turned water into wine. By a miracle he saved this household from mortified feelings. He found six water-pots standing in the court of the house, and these he ordered the servants to fill with water. When this was done, he told the servants to draw out and serve to the guests. This they did, and to their amazement found that the water had become wine. In the words of Dryden,

"The conscious water saw its God and blushed."

The change was accomplished by a mere act of Christ's will. The change was instantaneous, and

this was the miracle. Usually water passes into wine by a slow but beautiful process of nature. It becomes wine by means of the vine and the soil and the sunshine and the seasons. Jesus performed it by an instantaneous act. He accelerated the process of nature. He dispensed with the vineyard, and yet gave only what the vineyard could give. By this act he proved that all creative power was his, and that he was the Creator among his works. By this act he proved his identity with Him who works in every vineyard, and builds every grape in every cluster into a little goblet of wine. By this miracle he uttered in deeds what John in the first chapter of this Gospel uttered in words, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." He who built the forests of Oregon and the giant oaks of California, he who reared the cedars on Lebanon, those trees of God, he who grew the myriad vines in the vineyards on the banks of the Rhine, is the same person whom we see at Cana of Galilee, doing in the twinkling of an eye what in nature he does through the operations of the seasons.

Notice, for Christian comfort, two characteristics of Christ which appear in this connection.

(a.) *He supplies the wants of men most bountifully.*

He not only gives daily bread, he gives luxuries. He fills our vessels up to the brim. He does everything upon the scale upon which he makes his offer of redemption which reads, "Let whosoever will take of the water of life freely." Look

at his promises! They are as plenty as sun-rays. There is a sun-ray for every leaflet and floweret. The child of God, if he takes all that God gives, has to sing, "My cup runneth over."

(b.) *He sympathizes with the smallest wants of men.*

Luxuries are the smallest of our wants. We can live without them. No one in Cana would have perished if Jesus had not made wine. Now if Christ notices and supplies our smallest wants, he will notice and supply the deeper needs of life. This is true logic. It is perfectly legitimate to argue up and to argue down, to rise from the lesser to the greater, and to descend from the greater to the lesser. We have both methods of reasoning in the Bible. Paul argues from the greater to the lesser. He says, Since God has given us his Son, he cannot withhold the other needed and lesser gifts. Christ argues from the lesser to the greater. He says that if earthly fathers do thus and so, the Heavenly Father must go beyond them and act out his great nature. If a father took pity upon the little scratch on his child's finger, he would certainly look after a serious wound in his child's heart. If God looks after the ravens, he will certainly look after his own children. If he looks after the very hairs on our heads, what part of our personality will he overlook?

The narrative closes with the testing of the miracle. The new-made wine was carried to the governor of the feast. When he tasted it, he

called the bridegroom and said, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." The governor unwittingly contrasted Christ as a giver with man as a giver. He confirmed Christ's own words, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The world gives its sweets first and its dregs afterwards. As in the case of the Prodigal Son, it begins with plenty of money and music and feasting, but it ends with pauperism and the life of a swine-keeper. Christ puts the bitter before the sweet. The order of his gifts is first the conviction of sin, then pardon and the peace of God which passeth all understanding; first the afflictions which are not joyous but grievous, then the peaceable fruits of righteousness which come through afflictions; first the tribulations of earth, then the everlasting joys of heaven; first the mortal body with its corruption and dishonor and fleshliness, then the immortal body with its incorruption and honor and spirituality. The gifts of the world dwindle, the gifts of Christ develop. The pathway of the world's gifts is from groaning tables to husks, the pathway of Christ's gifts is from husks to the multifold fruit of the Tree of Life.

II. DEDUCTIONS FROM THE NARRATIVE.

I. *The Gospel life of Christ is full of instructive forecasts.*

These forecasts are warnings against coming

evils. Christ anticipates and rebukes sins by means of them. He throws them up as guards around the Christian Church.

(a.) There is a strike here against Mariolatry. Christ never countenanced the worship of the Virgin Mary. He lifted up barriers against it. In this narrative we have the first of the repeated rebukes which he gave by anticipation to that idolatrous reverence which has carried the human relationship into the spiritual kingdom, carried it even into heavenly places, exalting Mary as the Queen of heaven.

(b.) There is a strike here against the apocryphal gospels and writings concerning Christ. The apocryphal writings as collected and published form quite a book. They attempt to fill up the gaps of the Bible history of Jesus. They deal largely with the infancy and childhood of Christ. They give the world a tremendous crop of miracles purporting to have been wrought by Christ during his infancy. But many of these are wholly un-Christlike. They read on this order: Some children refuse to play with him, and as a punishment he turns them into kids. Another child by accident runs against him, and for this he causes him to fall down and expire. He has a dispute with his teacher about the order of the Hebrew alphabet and the teacher strikes him; for this he curses the teacher, and straightway his arm withers and he falls on his face and dies. He makes clay animals and birds, and causes them to fly and walk as a source of amusement. The miracles of

the apocryphal gospels are mostly of this order. They are either idle or monstrous. Foreseeing these writings, filled with the superstitions that had grown up in connection with the name of Jesus, the true gospel stamps them as false before they appear. It does this by means of one sentence, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee." It says that there were no miracles prior to this.

2. *Our Christian characters should shine out in our pleasures.*

Christ never intended that his people should be anchorites, living in the cave of the hermit. We have social natures, and these are the creation of God. We must have pleasures. It is our duty to have them. Christ himself, although he felt the pressure of his great work and the necessity of economizing his moments, went to a wedding feast. While there he cast no chill upon the festivities. No one wished that he had stayed at home. The Christian religion does not veto healthy and natural delights. It vetoes only heat and excess and exaggeration. It vetoes only those pleasures which are a reproach to manhood and womanhood. It allows us all pleasures in which Christ can join us. It allows us such pleasures as those in which the Christian character can shine out. Christ was Christ at the marriage feast of Cana, and when Christians go to such scenes they should be Christians.

3. *The exhibition of Christ's glory increases faith.*

Thus it was when he showed his glory at Cana.

It is written, "He manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him." Christ does not ask us to believe without evidence. He is continually revealing his glory. It shines out from this inspired page. While his glory opens to us more and more as we progress in our study of this Gospel, we should be able to feel an increase in the confirmation and growth of our faith. He who will let this Gospel into his soul will be like the apostle who wrote it; he will be an intense Christian full of faith and love and devotion. He will be a John among the disciples. But do not let us suppose that the manifestation of Christ's glory is confined to the printed Book. We will narrow our possessions if we do. No, Christ is continually showing his glory outside of the Book. He is showing his glory to-day in the wondrous works which he is doing among men. We see it in his answers to prayer. We see it in the changes which he is working in the characters of men. We see it in the grand triumphs of his cause. The glory of Christ, seen outside of the Book, has in it a power to strengthen our faith.

4. *There is a power in Christ to transform and elevate man.*

We must not forget that the miracle is a symbol. The lifting of water from a low grade in nature to a high grade in nature is simply an illustration. He who has power to elevate water has power to elevate man. Man is equal to the things of nature in his capability for elevation. Is this saying little or much for man? Let Ruskin

answer our question and you will see that it is saying much. In his "Modern Painters" he thus sets forth the capability of the things of nature to be elevated. He takes us to the mud or slime on the street of a manufacturing town, the absolute type of impurity, and he tells us, "This mud, or slime, is composed of four elements—clay, mixed with soot, a little sand, and water. These four may be separated each from the other. The clay particles, left to follow their own instinct of unity, become a clear, hard substance, so set that it can deal with light in a wonderful way, and gather out of it the loveliest blue rays only, refusing the rest. We call it then a sapphire. The sand arranges itself in mysterious, infinitely fine parallel lines, which reflect the blue, green, purple, and red rays in the greatest beauty. We call it then an opal. The soot becomes the hardest thing in the world, and, for the blackness it had, obtains the power of reflecting all the rays of the sun at once in the vividest blaze that any solid thing can shoot. We call it then a diamond. Last of all the water becomes a dew-drop, or a crystalline star of snow." Thus Ruskin sets forth in his own grand style the possibility of the things of nature for elevation. Now man's possibility for elevation is not one whit less than that possessed by the things of nature, even when these things of nature are wrought upon by the power of God. Let Christ's divine power, which wrought upon the water and made it wine, take hold of the vilest specimen of a man, and it can transform him into

the perfect likeness of Christ himself. It can make him fit to dwell in the uncreated presence of the infinitely glorious and holy God. It can make him so pure and upright that he can walk the crystal streets of the celestial city without casting the least shadow upon them. It can so beautify him that the keen omniscient eye cannot find a flaw in him. It has done this. It is doing this every day. Whatever Christ's power touches it ennobles and makes Christlike. This moulding power of Christ has high ideals, and into these ideals it is patterning men. Its ideals are heavenly. Its ideals are God's communicable attributes, and it is assimilating men into conformity to these. Changing water into wine is nothing in comparison with this. When the work of Christ's power has been completed, then will come the marriage supper of the Lamb, for the Church, his bride, will be fully ready. Happy were they who were at the wedding in Cana of Galilee: "But blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS; OR, THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION.

JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD.—*John 3:3.*

THE term "regeneration" is a compound Latin term which literally means "to be born again." Formerly unbelieving men hated this term and ridiculed it. They said that it was fantastic and visionary and expressed an absurdity. To be born again! Nonsense! The thing is contrary to nature and unscientific. Now the term has become quite popular. It is used frequently when men wish to describe a complete and radical change which they propose to effect. Even infidel revolutionists use the term. When they talk of the revolution which they intend to inaugurate, this is a favorite expression, "We mean the regeneration of our country."

This chapter asserts the necessity of regeneration to the Christian life. A treatise on it means a doctrinal treatise. I know that doctrinal preaching is not considered the preaching for the times; but I know just as well that this is not the decision of the deepest and best thinkers of the Christian community. It is the decision only of the superficial, who are thorough neither in Christian doctrine nor in Christian character. Christian doctrine forms the foundation of Christian belief.

Christian belief gives rise to Christian life and practice. Christ preached doctrine and made the apostles. The apostles preached doctrine and made the early Christian churches. These churches were all characterized for burning faith and zeal and self-sacrifice. What would the apostle John be without the doctrine of the divinity of Christ? What would the apostle Paul be without the doctrine of justification by faith? Even the practical James had to be doctrinal in order to be true to his Christian nature. He dealt in a wholesale way with *the fruits* of the Christian life, but he could not write his epistle of works without presenting the doctrine of regeneration as *the root* of all Christian fruit. With this doctrine ignored and left out, his treatise on the Christian life would be incomplete and misleading. He presents the doctrine in this one brief but positive statement: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of his truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." The Christianity which has been built upon the basis of Christian doctrine has not yet been improved. There is no set of men in the modern Christian community that excel the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the Covenanters, the Huguenots, the Waldensians. The largest dish served on the gospel table at which these sublime Christian heroes fed *was the doctrinal dish*. They were brought up on doctrinal preaching. Suppose that we did decide to discard Christian doctrine from the pulpit, we would have to make an exception of this one doctrine—*the doctrine of regeneration*. Re-

generation is more than a doctrine; *it is a fact*. The new creation is as real in the life of the Christian as the creation of our solar system is in the material universe of God. Regeneration, therefore, must always be a living and a present theme in the Christian Church, for it is a present fact in the life of the individual saint. Without it there is no spiritual life, activity, worship. In making regeneration the subject of thought, we will keep our minds upon five general statements, drawn from Christ's conversation with Nicodemus.

I. *Our first statement is, Regeneration is all-important.*

Everything we say ought to magnify the importance of regeneration, but in this statement we wish to bring before us the way in which Christ magnifies its importance. We wish to look at regeneration as it is in the history which records the dealings of Jesus with Nicodemus.

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night to be instructed by him in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. This kingdom had been the hope and inspiration to which Israel had looked for centuries. In giving him instruction, we may conclude that Jesus will be most accurate and thorough. He will commence his teachings with the foundation principle. Now, what was the foundation fact which Christ presented to this man who sought entrance into the kingdom of God? *It was the new birth*. Over the gates of the kingdom Christ inscribed with his own hands, "Except a man be born again, he can-

not enter the kingdom of God." Without regeneration, a man who enters the church and publicly confesses Christ is only playing the Christian. He is no better spiritually than a galvanized corpse. Under the power of electricity the corpse may open and shut its eyes, move its hands and feet, pass through various contortions, but there is no life in it. Without regeneration, a man can only have a name to live, while he is dead.

Several things emphasize Christ's estimate of regeneration. The time at which he gave his instruction does. It was night. He might reasonably have excused himself. He was weary with the work of the crowded day which had just closed; he was entitled to rest and sleep. It was cowardice in Nicodemus that brought him in the darkness, and Jesus might justly have rebuked his cowardice and have sent him away. He might have said, "Come openly to-morrow in daylight, and like a man, and take your place among the multitude, and I will instruct you in common with them." Christ esteemed the subject of regeneration of too great importance to treat Nicodemus in this way, so at the sacrifice of rest and sleep he discoursed upon it.

There is an emphasis also in the very directness with which Christ treats the subject. Nicodemus begins the conversation with a complimentary address, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can," etc. Christ does not stop to return the compliment, or to note the position of the man or his research or his logical

reasoning about his divine mission. He at once takes up the subject. The subject was the most important thing of the hour in his estimation.

Christ, again, puts his seal upon the importance of regeneration by the care which he takes to instruct Nicodemus and to correct his misapprehensions. By his question Nicodemus shows that he supposed that the physical man should be born again. Christ teaches him that the spiritual man must be born again. Though a man were born a hundred times physically, he would be no better, "for that which is born of the flesh is flesh." Nicodemus acts as though regeneration were contrary to reason, because it is enshrouded in mystery. Christ shows that although the method which is divine is a mystery, yet the effects of regeneration are tangible and visible. This is all that is needed. The method of the Spirit, who regenerates, is like the method of the wind. The method of the wind we cannot understand, but we can hear it, and we can see results when it sweeps over the land, so we do not doubt its existence or its operation. Even so we can see the men who are spiritually born, who are regenerated by the Spirit; we can see the product of their lives, and this is enough to show us that regeneration is a possibility and that it is desirable.

II. *Regeneration is wholly a divine act.*

It is in no sense man's act. We have no part in our regeneration. I want to make this statement as bold as possible, for it is the teaching of

the Bible and it strikes at a great many errors. It is very humiliating, but still it is Scripture, and all that a minister can do is to proclaim Scripture. Scripture teaches that in our spiritual nature we are dead until we are resurrected by the Spirit of God. The physical nature is living, but the spiritual nature is dead. We sometimes see a part of a man dead, while the other parts are living. For example, the eyes are sightless; they are dead to the world of light and color. Or the arm is paralyzed; it is dead, it has no power or motion. Or the ear is deaf; it is dead to the world of music. These parts are dead while yet the other members of a man's body are living. Before the regeneration the physical, bodily man lives, but the spiritual nature, the nature which deals with God and divine things, just as the ear deals with music, is dead. It does not recognize God nor discern the things of the Spirit nor see the invisible realities of eternity. In regeneration the Spirit of God comes to the dead spiritual nature in us and breathes into it the breath of life, just as at the beginning God breathed into the clay form which he had moulded and fashioned with his own hands, and the form of clay arose a living man called Adam. The work of the Spirit extends to the whole soul. The whole soul is regenerated. This must be so, because the soul is a unit and is indivisible. Regeneration means the life of the whole soul. No new faculties are brought into being, but the lifeless faculties are acted upon. The mind is illumined, the eyes of the understand-

ing are opened, the conscience is awakened, the will is renewed and set free from the bondage of lust and passion.

Take an illustration. Here is a perfect locomotive, finished and placed on the railroad track. But it is without life. It has no power. Its beautiful mechanism exists to no purpose. What does it need to make it a power? It needs steam. When filled with steam, which is its life, then every valve and shaft and wheel is full of vitality, and at the scream of the whistle the engine begins to stir itself and to move and gather speed, until it bounds through the valleys and over the hills with the velocity of the wind. Regeneration is to dead spiritual faculties what steam is to that beautiful piece of mechanism. Every faculty is filled with life and set in operation. The engine has no power to put steam into itself; that is done by an outside living person. Lazarus had no power to bring himself to life; that was done independent of him, by Christ, who is the resurrection and the life. As Lazarus was dead physically, the unregenerate man is dead spiritually. This being so, you can see the fallacy which some teach when they say that all that a man needs to do in order to reach fitness for heaven is to develop what is in him by nature. God's Word teaches that far more is needed. It is necessary that God, by his Spirit, shall come to him and put the spark of divine life into him. It is the development of this new life which the Spirit puts into him that constitutes preparation for heaven.

That regeneration is wholly the act of God, and not in any sense the work of man, is set forth by the figures used to designate the change which regeneration produces. It is called a resurrection. Only divine power can resurrect. When the prophet Ezekiel looked upon the valley which was filled with the whitened bones of centuries, and was asked by the Lord the question, Can these bones live? he felt that only Almighty God could make them live. When bone after bone all through the valley began to move till all were leaping and skipping here and there searching for their companion bones in the once perfect man; when skeleton after skeleton was completed and clothed with flesh and filled with life; when the valley was filled with a vast army of men marching with full life, he said, "This is the work of God; only he can convert bleached bones into mighty battalions." The regeneration of man is a work like that which God wrought in the valley of dead bones. It is as truly the evidence of the presence of God.

But let us adopt another method in treating this fact which the Scriptures lay down with such emphasis for the humbling of man's pride, viz.: Regeneration is absolutely and wholly the act of God. We want to notice the argument which can be formulated from science to support this fact. Men have all along hated the statement "that God only can regenerate the soul," "the Spirit only can give spiritual life." They have taught the doctrine that the spiritual life can rise in man

spontaneously, if man will only bring himself into a proper atmosphere. A man can become better and better, until in the course of progress he reaches that quality of religious nature known as spiritual life. This life is not something added from without to the natural man, it is simply the development of the natural man. Up until lately we had to rely wholly upon Scripture for our doctrine that the spiritual life is something which comes into us from without. But lately science has come to our help. It teaches us that there is no such thing as spontaneous generation, i. e., life coming from death, a live spiritual man springing from a dead natural man. Science lays down this law: Life can only come from the touch of life. The attempt to get the living out of the dead is an absurdity. There is no spontaneous generation of life. It is interesting to look at the experiments by which science reaches these conclusions. Let me present the process briefly as it is found in Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World:" Bastian, who argued that life was generated spontaneously, took a glass vessel which he filled three parts with an infusion of hay and organic matter. These he boiled to kill all the germs of life. Then they were hermetically sealed to exclude the outer air. The air inside the glass was supposed to be dead. Bastian said, "Now if life appears in this glass jar full of death, it must spring into being of itself." Life did appear inside in myriad quantity. Tyndall and other scientists were aroused by Bastian's experiment to experiment for

themselves. They found germs of life that were almost fire-proof. So they used a higher temperature and different methods to annihilate life, and the result was that no life sprang up from matter proven to be absolutely dead. So far as science is concerned, these experiments have established this fact, You cannot get life out of death. If a particle of dead, inorganic matter is to get into the world above it, i. e., into the animal world or the vegetable world, it must be born from above. No change of substance, no modification of environment, no chemistry, no electricity, can endow a single atom of the mineral world with the attribute of life. If the dead atom is to get into the tree and become part of it and live, the tree must send its roots after it and come to it with the life, and it must be subjected to the touch of the life of the tree before it can cross from the world below into the world above. If the life of the tree does not touch it, it will remain dead for ever. It must be born from above. Science has set all nature ringing the cry of Christ, "Ye must be born again; ye must be born from above." The law of God in both the natural and religious world is one and the same. If the dead natural man is to get into the world above him, i. e., into the spiritual world, the world of God, God must come down to him, and he must feel the touch of the divine life. He must be born from above. The doctrine of regeneration is scientific.

III. *Regeneration is absolutely necessary for admission to heaven.*

The two "Verilys" of the text lay stress upon this point. They have the solemnity and force of an oath in pressing home the statement of Jesus.

Regeneration is necessary as a vindication of God's holiness and a testimonial to his character. The standard which one sets up is an index of what he is himself. We know a college by the course of study it prescribes. We know a parent by the discipline under which he puts his child. We know God by what he makes necessary to fellowship with him.

The fitness of things requires regeneration. A sinful nature would not match the holiness of heaven. The keepers at the gates can admit only what is congenial. At every admission the reputation of heaven is at stake. It is a certain character only that can abide in the tabernacle of God: it is the regenerated character. Nothing else will be accepted. There is no substitute for it. A mere profession of faith is not a substitute. Outward reformation is not a substitute. Nothing will do but this, "Man must become a new creature."

Regeneration is necessary to make heaven enjoyable. An unregenerated man would have no aptitude for the exercises of heaven if he were within its gates. He would have no sympathy with its services. It is amazing to hear people who exclude God from their lives on earth talking about going to heaven, expressing the desire to be found there in the other life. It is the height of foolishness for some people to want to go to

heaven. If they were taken at their word and translated there, they would find that heaven was the worst place in the universe for them. If they cannot stand a Sabbath in the service of God's house upon earth, the Sabbatism of heaven would be an irksome, painful imprisonment to them; it would be eternal agony. The presence of Christ, when he was on earth, was torment to the demons. They cried out when he approached them, "Art thou come to torment us before our time!" Unregeneracy is as completely alienated from God as demoniacism. A saint in hell or a sinner in heaven—of the two I believe that the sinner would be worse off. It is idle for men to talk about going to heaven, and to express the desire that they may reach heaven at last; what they should desire to seek is regeneration, preparation for heaven. There is no heaven for an unregenerated man. I recently came across this item of history, which serves as an illustration in point. When the Carthaginians captured Regulus, the heroic soldier of Rome, they put him to the most cruel tortures. They cut off his eyelids and bound him with his back to the earth and his face to the sky, compelling him to look unsheltered into the insufferable radiance of the sun. What were the elements in that intolerable agony? Simply these two: an open eye and a pure glory. That is the picture of an unregenerated sinner in heaven. No anguish conceivable to a lost soul could equal this: that with open eye he should be compelled to endure the full blaze of God's glory.

IV. *Regeneration, although wholly and absolutely of God, is easily attainable.* In the universal offer of the gospel there is a universal offer of regeneration. If this be not true, the gospel offer is not worth the paper upon which it is written. But it is true. I make this point because there are some people who feel uneasy about regeneration, seeing that it is wholly the act of God. If they could regenerate themselves, they would have greater comfort; they would feel surer of regeneration. As it comes from God, they do not feel sure that they can get it or that it is easily attainable by men. I know how that feeling originates. It originates from looking at great spiritual facts as these are systematized in human theologies. In these systems one fact is taken from God's Word, and from the place where God has placed it, and another is taken from another place, and these facts are squared and fitted together by human ingenuity. I find myself perplexed when I try to fit things together in this way. But I find that I can take the facts of Scripture just as they are on the inspired page, and believe them, and act upon them, and fit them into my Christian living, and there is no conflict in them whatever. This is what God wants us to do. He wants flesh and blood creeds. He wants a living document. He wants a Christian man embodying Christian truth. In reading the Scriptures as they present the subject of regeneration, I do not see where a man can get any ground for being uneasy about regeneration because it is wholly in God's hand. That

is a reason for confidence, just as the fact that we are absolutely dependent upon God is a reason for joy. We are so weak that self-dependence would be a very uncertain thing. God is all-powerful and unchangeable, and dependence upon him means absolute safety. If we had to regenerate ourselves, the regeneration would be poorly done. But, then, will God give men regeneration freely and largely? As though to preclude this question and give it no basis whatever, Christ puts back of the necessity of regeneration the glowing and infinite love of God. You no sooner read, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God," than you read also, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." The two declarations are part of the same chapter in God's Word. Overpowered with the sense of the infinitude of God's love as seen in the gift of his Son, there is no room in our hearts for the surmise that he will withhold anything. Regeneration is necessary to make God's love, manifested in his Son, effective to us. It is therefore to be taken for granted that he will give regeneration, and make the offer of it as broad as the offer of his Son. As well might the flowers of the garden fear that they would be denied the refreshing raindrops, while the shower is falling upon them, as the soul fear that God would deny it regeneration. As well also might the particles of soil fear that they would not be allowed to enter the plant and live

in the bright colors of the blossom, when the innumerable roots of the plant are pushing their way after these particles and long to translate and vivify them.

V. *Regeneration is easily recognized.*

Unregeneracy is marked and discernible. Why should not degeneracy be marked and discernible? Neglect heaped on the Word of God, want of the spirit of prayer, avoidance of the communion of the saints, the habit of any gross sin, these all indicate unregeneracy. Notice we say *habit* of any gross sin. For a saint may be suddenly overpowered by such a sin and fall into it for a time through temptation. As unregeneracy is marked and discernible, so is regeneracy. It is not necessary, as some would teach, that we should be able to tell the time when regeneration took place. We may be able to do this, or we may not, but there is no Scripture which says that we must be able. It is not necessary that we shall be able. If we are living the regenerated life, we are as well off as those who, like Paul, can give manner and date and place of regeneration. What more had Paul? What more have these persons than the product of regeneration, viz., a regenerated life? We know nothing of our physical birth. But that does not trouble us. We know that we have been born physically. We have physical life. We eat, we drink, we sleep, we walk, we see. Even so if in the spiritual life we enjoy God, delight in his worship, in his people, in his ideals, in his book, in his day, in the thoughts of being with him for ever,

this is enough. This is a regenerated life, and it could not be if regeneration had not preceded it.

Are you regenerated? Does the life which you live say so? Do the reigning desires within you say so? Do your fellowships and your pursuits and your recreations and your pleasures say so? If you are regenerated, then a magnificent future awaits you. To you regeneration is the dawn of the spiritual day, and that means, by-and-by, the glory and splendor of the noontide. That means the day in its perfection. What is the day in its perfection? It is eternity with God in heaven. Regeneration means entrance into the kingdom; and entrance into the kingdom means the crown and the seat upon the throne which Christ has promised to all who are his.

Are you unregenerated? If so, you see your duty. Follow in the course of Nicodemus. Remember what he did. He let his natural and physical man, which was living and active, bring his dead spiritual nature to Christ, that He might speak to it the word of life and regenerate it. Let your physical man bring your dead spiritual nature to the mercy-seat, to the place where the promise is and where the Spirit works, and you shall not fail of regeneration. The gift which God made of his own Son for the redemption of the world says that you shall not fail. The universal offer of the gospel which God by his Spirit makes says that you shall not fail. Who dares say that you shall?

CHRIST'S DEFINITION OF WORSHIP: HIS
SERMON AT JACOB'S WELL.

"GOD IS A SPIRIT; AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH."—*John 4:24.*

THE worship of God is the highest act of man. It is ultimate in the scale of human possibilities. It is the occupation of heaven. We know what the heavenly life is. The Bible conception of heaven is a world of glory with a throne of glory, and God on the throne surrounded by the countless multitudes of the saved from every kindred and people and tongue and nation, all casting their crowns at his feet and making the glory-world ring with *Te Deums* that sound like the noise of many waters and the roll of mighty thunders. There is nothing higher than heaven-life. Now the spirit which dominates the heaven-life is *the spirit of worship*. I repeat therefore my first sentence: *The worship of God is the highest act of man.*

If this be true, it is self-evident that no question is more vital or fundamental to those who are stepping heavenward than the question, What is true worship? What views of God and what attitudes towards God does it include? What feelings in man does it embrace? What sublime resultants does it insure?

In dealing with Christ's definition of worship there are two things upon which I wish to speak.

THE THINGS WHICH CHRIST ASSUMES.

1. *Christ assumes that man alone of all the living occupants of earth is able to recognize God and feel his presence.*

This is strictly true of man. It is true of no other earthly creature. The lower animals, however remarkable their sagacity or keen their instinct, have no sense of the divine. The unfolding beauties of nature, the vast operations of material laws, the sunlight on the slopes of morning, and the silent darkness in the valleys of night, these awaken in them neither awe nor admiration. They hear no message in the whisper of the wind, and the tempest bears no voice of God. But man is nobler than they. He feels after the divine. There come in upon his soul, through all his senses, the signs of an invisible presence feeding the heart with a consciousness of God.

2. *Christ assumes that man is the only being on the earth in whom God recognizes the existence of intellectual and moral power.*

To man only has God given a revelation. To man only does God say, "Come and let us reason together." This power to reason with God is the chief glory of human nature. My ability to take God's thoughts into my soul and feel their power impresses me with a sense of my kinship with the divine. Between brutes of the highest type of instinct and myself I feel that there is an infinite chasm. They cannot understand my thoughts. I cannot reason with them. We have no mental

fellowship. But I can reason with God, feel the force of his ideas, and bow to their hallowing and uplifting influence. Because I can, God deals with me as he does not deal with the creatures below me.

3. *Christ assumes that man is a constitutional worshipper.*

This also is a fact. Man's whole being cries out for the living God. There are some who seek to disparage worship by representing it as an arbitrary and unnatural service. They denominate it a *human device*. They speak of it as the fruit of priestcraft. But how came the priest into being? He was created by the demand of human nature. What gives the priest his power? He receives his power from the element of worship in human nature. The disposition to worship belongs to the structure of the soul, and it can never be eradicated until the soul itself is destroyed. Worship is as old as the records of humanity. Adam heard God's voice in Paradise before the days of priests, and Abel was his own priest when he offered sacrifices to God.

There are some who hint that the spirit of worship is dying out. They claim that the progress of science is annihilating it, and that this is the mission of science. They say science has already made an attack on prayer. True; but there is not one house of prayer less. Is it the mission of science to degrade human nature? Science is no new thing. It has lived by the side of religion ever since the days of Christ, and religion has as

yet received from it no death-blow. When science gave us the Copernican theory of astronomy and took away the Ptolemaic theory, was there anything in the change to paralyze wonder or release the mind of man from awe and worship as it stood in the presence of the God of the stars? When science succeeded in measuring the speed of light, did religion suffer any shock? When science untwisted the sunbeam and lifted before men the different hues which are braided into its structure, did the new knowledge injure the religious instincts of humanity? Rather did not men praise God with a fresh force because of the hidden wonders discovered in his works?

There is nothing in the advances of science to stifle in the soul of man the cry of adoration or to embarrass the intellect of man in taking the attitude of faith and of worship. On the contrary, science has opened up the works of God, and has filled up for us in the handwriting of God himself many pages of the Book of Nature which were only blanks to past generations. Ah against what folly are we arguing thus? Our knowledge of the universe to dry up the springs of awe and to hush the cry of wonder that goes out from brain and heart into the surrounding mystery! Who would count that an advance? Yet by the decree of God humanity is bound to advance. Let the man come forward who is ready to say under the starry arch of night, "I know so much of nature that I blow from me as a bubble the thought of God and count it childish to entertain the thought of a sov-

ereign Mind." Did Newton feel like saying that? Would Herschel say that in his observatory? If they had said it, would we think them to be the great men that we now think them to be? If David could have known the firmament as we know it, if he could have swept the skies with a Ross or a Lick telescope, would he have had less reason to cry, or would he have been less moved to exclaim, "When I look up into the heavens, the works of thy fingers, and to the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, then I say, Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" My fellow-men, worship will cease from the earth only when wonder dies in the heart of man and when the sense of the infinite is expunged from his soul. It will not be the progress of scientific knowledge, but the decay of the noble elements in human nature, that will banish worship from the world. The cry that worship is dying out is false. Man's danger has never been not to worship, but to over-worship. The conflict of the ages has been between Monotheism and Polytheism. Man's greatest danger is "gods many and lords many." This God himself teaches in the very first commandment of the Decalogue. In this commandment he feels impelled to say to man, "Thou shalt have no other god before me." It is in line with this first commandment that Jesus sets forth, in his interview with the Samaritan woman, the true object of worship and the true way of worshipping the true object.

THE THINGS WHICH CHRIST ASSERTS.

1. *True worship must be in harmony with the nature of God.*

(a.) *The true worshipper must know God as a person.*

We are not to think of God as a mere force, for this is an indefinite conception of him. We must think of him as a person. Christ sets him forth as a person having personal attributes, such as affections, will, freedom, intellect, the power to recognize and to reciprocate our love. This teaching of Christ is in harmony with reason. Reason says God has personality. It argues that no one can give to others that which he does not possess himself. The artist, the sculptor, the machinist can give to the picture, the statue, the engine only that idea or design which is in his own mind. The argument of reason is this: I have personality, therefore God who made me has personality, else he could not have given me personality. I imagine you say, "It is difficult for us to conceive of the personality of God. How are we to reach it?" The answer is, Think of God in Christ. You can conceive of Christ's personality. Think of him, for he is God. Think of the attributes which he displayed and the virtues which he lived. I do not say think of his body, but think of his moral qualities. His own words to those who are reaching after just conceptions of God are, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

(b.) *The true worshipper must know God as a spiritual personality.*

"God is a Spirit." Our highest idea of existence is existence in the form of spirit. We contrast spirit with body because that which is body is limited. It is controlled by space. When we think of God we think of him as without body, i. e., uncontrolled by space and capable of possessing the attributes which we ascribe to him, such as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence. We feel the weakness of human language to explain what God, who is a Spirit, is. Nevertheless we are capable of recognizing and understanding him in part. We understand him through our spirit, of which he is the Father. We can deal with spirits because we have spirits. We love the absent author whom we have never seen, and hold fellowship with him. Why do we love him? For his body's sake? No. We know nothing of his body. It may be repulsive. It is his soul that we love. His soul has given us thoughts which thrill us, and we are conscious of the tingle of pleasure within our souls. The attributes of the man's spirit are what we admire. It is not absurd then to call us to worship God, who is a Spirit; who is like the better part of man, only possessing attributes which are perfect and infinite.

(c.) *The true worshipper must know God the Spirit-person as a Father.*

Christ says the spirit of a father is a revelation of God. The doctrine of the divine Fatherhood is peculiarly the revelation of Jesus. In speaking of

him in his relation to his people he never speaks of him save as "*the Father*." Does he speak of providence, the Father directs providence. Does he speak of worship, the Father is the object of worship. The great defect in the worship of man is just here: worshippers forget and lose sight of the grand doctrine of the New Testament Dispensation, namely, the Fatherhood of God. Consequently they have defective views of God. They have God before them as an infinite Shylock, a stern judge, and they are afraid of him. Their nature closes in his presence as the sensitive flower closes in the storm. The cultivation therefore of the filial disposition is worship. God seeks the worship of sons and not of criminals and slaves.

Grasp the thought of God's Fatherhood, for this is the starting-point of true worship. The thought of God's Fatherhood does two things.

First, It makes the object of worship intelligible to the mind. Take the names of God elsewhere used: infinite Creator, universal Sovereign, absolute Disposer. What finite mind can understand these? But a child can understand what a father is.

Second, It makes the object of worship attractive. Creator, Sovereign, Judge—there is something in these names which overawes and repels. But the name of "Father" is full of invitation. The child joyously leaps into its father's arms. Even the Prodigal Son is not afraid of his father: "I will arise and go to my father!" It was the thought of his father that brought him home

again. You are familiar with the story of Hector and Andromache and their little son Astyanax. The war was raging; the Greeks had walled Troy round about, and Hector felt it his duty to arm himself in full panoply and go without the walls and meet the Greeks in hand-to-hand combat. When he had donned his full regimentals he came to take his farewell of Andromache his wife and his little son Astyanax, whom she held in her arms. As he approached the little fellow with outstretched hands, the child, instead of leaping towards the father, screamed and shrank back affrighted. This was not like Astyanax. Why the change? This is the reason: the warrior conceals the ~~Hector~~ ^{man}. The coat of mail and the flashing helmet hide the father. Seeing this, Hector threw off the helmet and displaced the coat of mail and approached the child as father and not as warrior. Then the little fellow leaped into his arms and covered him with kisses and caresses. I would have you use the story as a parable throwing light upon the Fatherhood of God and its influence upon the soul.

We cannot overestimate the value of realizing this truth. It changes the whole nature of worship and gives a proper appreciation of the means of grace. It makes these the medium of intercourse between God and us. It makes his Word our Father's voice, and our praise the child's voice. It makes the throne of grace a mutual meeting-place. It makes all nature God's temple, filled with warbling songs and thrilling anthems. When one

realizes the Fatherhood of God, God becomes to him a veritable personality and everything in the spiritual life becomes real ; prayer becomes real, praise becomes real, trust becomes real, security under God's care becomes real, consciousness of the divine presence becomes real, and heart-burning communion with God becomes real.

Speaking of this treatise of Jesus in which he sets forth God the Father as the object of worship, Ernest Renan says, "The day when Jesus pronounced this word he was truly the Son of God. He spoke for the first time the sure word on which the edifice of eternal religion shall rest. He founded the pure worship, of no land, of no date, which all lofty souls will practise to the end of time. His religion that day was not only the religion good for humanity, it was absolute religion ; and if other planets have inhabitants endowed with reason and morality, their religion can be no other than that which Jesus proclaimed at the well of Jacob. The word of Jesus has been a gleam in a dark night. But the gleam will become the full day, and after having run through the whole circle of errors, mankind will return to that word as the imperishable expression of its faith and hope."

2. *True worship has its seat in the inner man.*

Christ has thrown worship upon the heart and soul. Worship is the overflowing and outgoing of the soul to God in homage and love and trust and admiration and desire and praise. There is no worship in the mere sounding of brass or tinkling of cymbals. In so far as the spiritual part of

our nature does not worship, our worship is of no value. Except the soul is in exercise, it is in vain that the people bow the head like a bulrush or put on sackcloth and ashes. Such worship makes the deity a senseless idol who can be hoodwinked by appearances. God has always sought the inner worship, the exercise of the soul. He sought it even in the midst of the ritualism of Judaism. He said of formalists, "In vain do this people draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me." The whole of the fiftieth Psalm is one long protest upon the part of God against formalism. In it he sets realism and ritualism against each other, and says that one cry coming from the distressed soul of the child of God and sent to him in faith is worth all the ritual in existence. In this Psalm he rings out the key-note of true worship, namely, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a contrite heart." There is always a straight pathway to heaven for the cry of the heart.

There is a closing practical question which I wish to press home. That question is this:

AM I A TRUE WORSHIPPER?

My fellow-worshipper, with you and me that is the question of all questions. But I am asked, How shall we answer it? How shall we ascertain whether or no we are true worshippers? What does God require of us in true worship?

God requires that we shall bring before him in worship a true character. The self of the worshipper is part of worship. Our life is back of our wor-

ship. Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday determine our Sabbath. Our praises and our prayers do not rise above the level of our daily living. For true worship, the worship and the worshipper must harmonize. Worship is holy; the character therefore of the worshipper must be holy.

How clearly this is brought out by the Hebrew Psalmist. He asks this question, "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, and who shall abide in his presence?" Then he goes into the place of business and into the social circle and finds the man who treats his neighbor's reputation aright and who handles his money aright, and says, "This is the man."

"Who, O Jehovah, shall be a guest in thy tent?
Who shall dwell in thy holy mountain?
He that slandereth not with his tongue,
That doeth no evil to his friend,
Nor taketh up a scandal against his neighbor.
Despicable in his sight are the vile,
But those that fear Jehovah he honoreth.
He sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not;
His silver he putteth not out to usury,
Nor taketh a bribe against the innocent.
He that doeth these things
Shall not be overthrown for ever."

How clearly is our thought brought out by the chief of the prophets also. Apparently everything was as it ought to be in Israel. Their profession was grand, their creed was orthodox; they made the temple echo with silvery psalms, they kept the altar aflame with burnt offerings, and they filled the

court with delightful fragrance. But the prophet upon investigation found that their daily life was wretched. It was full of violence and lies and injustice. They measured with short yardsticks and weighed with false balances and sold with a small bushel-measure. Making this discovery, the prophet stood in the midst of his countrymen as they gathered for worship and startled them with the announcement, "My countrymen, because of your false life your worship is an abomination to the holy God." He proclaimed to them and to the world that TRUE LIFE ONLY IS WORSHIP. Worship is the soul honoring God in everything it does.

Worshipper in the house of God, what is the character of your general life? What are you in the home, in business, in society? Answer these questions and you answer the question, "Am I a true worshipper?"

THE FIVE THOUSAND FED.

"AND THEY FILLED TWELVE BASKETS WITH THE FRAGMENTS OF THE FIVE BARLEY-LOAVES."—*John 6:13.*

THE evangelist in this part of his Gospel adds miracle to miracle. This multiplication of miracles reminds us of the Mount of Transfiguration, where Jesus let his divine splendor break forth unrestrained in magnificent effulgence. As his glory flashed forth on Transfiguration Mount in wonderful fulness, so in this chapter of gospel history his divine power manifests itself in great fulness in miraculous deeds. These are the deeds which filled his followers with wild enthusiasm.

The miracle recorded especially before us is such as we would expect John to record. It is right in line with the design of his Gospel, which sets forth the divinity of Jesus Christ and makes it clear that he is the Son of God. This miracle shows him to be greater than the forces at work in the wide grain-fields. He is able to do in an instant what it takes these forces whole seasons to do. Grain-fields can give bread only after months of hard work; he gives bread in an instant. He can make bread as rapidly as his will can issue a decree. The forces at work in the grain-fields of nature are to us pictures of inconceivable forces. He is mightier than these, for he can outdo these.

We cannot think of this miracle of Christ with-

out thinking of the works of God in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament God is set forth as miraculously feeding his covenant people in the desert and spreading daily a table for thousands. He is also represented as miraculously multiplying the meal in the widow's barrel and the oil in the widow's cruse. Jesus knew all this. He knew also that these things were familiar to the multitudes about him. He now performed this miracle that men might see that he was one with the God of the Old Testament whom Israel worshipped. If he is one with the God of the Old Testament, then he can legitimately claim the faith and worship given to the God of the Old Testament. This miracle prepared the way for the words he was about to speak and emphasized them, "I and the Father are one." It is a legitimate part of this Gospel, which was meant to establish that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

THE MIRACLE.

The miracle is recorded by all of the evangelists. Is there anything remarkable in this? Yes. It is the only miracle which all four record. Like the stories of the crucifixion and resurrection, it is repeated four times. These four repetitions mean that it is worthy of particular attention. Christ himself estimated it highly, for he used it as the basis of one of his magnificent discourses in which he offered himself to the world as the Bread of Life.

From the other evangelists we learn that Christ

had withdrawn to a desert place for the purpose of securing rest for both his disciples and himself. His disciples had just returned from a laborious missionary tour, and he himself had just heard of the execution of his friend and forerunner, John the Baptist. Retirement was certainly the need of the hour. But the multitudes would not let him retire. They followed him into the desert. As it was about the time of one of the feasts, and as the people from all parts of the land were on their way to Jerusalem, they followed him by thousands. He looked upon their presence as a call from his Father to give them the everlasting truth, and so he gave up the idea of resting and took up the task of teaching them. It is probable that the miracle of multiplying the loaves and fishes was wrought at the end of the first day.

The greatness of the miracle is set forth by the remarks of the disciples when Jesus proposed to feed the multitudes. They looked at the proposal from all sides and pronounced it an utter impossibility. They calculated how much it would cost to buy provisions for them, and found it would take more money than they had in their treasury to provide even a mouthful for each one present. They could not possibly command the needed sum. If they had the requisite sum, they would have to scour the country far and near to gather what was necessary. The only provisions at hand were what an enterprising lad had brought with an eye to profit. He had only five barley-loaves or wafers and two small fishes. One of the disciples

despairingly referred to the small stock which the lad had, and concluded that it would be absurd to try and feed the multitude with these.

The only practical plan which the disciples could think of was to send the people away and let them scatter and buy for themselves. This they proposed to Christ. It was like all of their proposals: it was away below his ideal and purpose. To Christ, who had the power to feed them, such benevolence would have been of the kind which Jesus speaks against; a benevolence which says, "Be ye warmed and be ye filled," and does nothing; a compassion working itself out only in good advice. Good advice is a good thing, but it will not satisfy hunger. It will not pay for needed groceries. It will not square back rent and keep the landlord from throwing the few household effects upon the sidewalk. There is a better compassion than the compassion which only gives advice; it is the compassion which feeds and clothes and lends a helping hand. The first kind is the compassion of selfishness; this second kind is the compassion of the gospel. There is more gospel in a dollar bill than a whole hour's lecture filled with rules of economy and Scripture quotations and good advice generally, when the sinner whom you are lecturing is penniless and needs material help. In the exercise of benevolence and compassion Christ should be our pattern. He shows us that compassion should be expressed in living deeds. Let individual Christians follow Christ; let the Church as an organic body follow Christ.

When this is done, the popular charge brought against religion will be taken away, namely, that religion is exclusively engaged with matters of doctrine and theory and speculation and the inner life of the spirit, and that it has little interest in the material welfare of men. The charge is that there is nothing practical in it for poor, sick, dying humanity needing food and bread and sympathy. If that be the way the Christian religion appears to the world, the fault is not in the Christian religion, but in the men who profess it. Christianity is not responsible for the life of every miserly man who has taken on him the name of Christ. Such men are not the exponents of the Christian religion. Christ himself is the only infallible exponent. The Christian religion must be judged by Christ. Look at *Him* and you will learn what he would have his followers be and do. He was a continual benefactor. He not only forgave sins, but he healed the diseases of men. He went to their sick-rooms and met them by the graves of their dead. It is said that once, during the performance of a comedy in a Roman theatre, one of the actors gave utterance to this sentiment, "I am a man; therefore nothing that is human can be foreign to me." The audience greeted the sentiment with thunders of applause. If this man was worthy of such applause, of how much greater applause is Jesus worthy! He said not in comedy, not in play, but in real life, in living actions, that he had a heart to feel for every woe and every need of humanity. His compassion was the secret

of his power over human hearts. He was not only great Intellect, but he was great Heart. The men and the churches that are devoid of a practical sympathy and of a compassion which expresses itself in deeds and gifts of love, misrepresent him and his religion.

Christ would rather work a miracle than appear without compassion. He did work a miracle. He commanded his disciples to seat the multitudes upon the grass and to hold themselves in readiness to distribute the loaves and fishes. They felt themselves so helpless to feed these crowds that this command seemed like foolishness to them. No matter what they thought; duty is not determined by our ability, but by the command of God. When the crowds were seated in orderly companies of fifties and hundreds, Christ took the bread and gave thanks to God for it and asked his blessing upon the meal. This he did amid a deep solemnity and a sacred hush. This religious service the people expected. The Jews always asked a blessing before meals. It was a popular saying among them that he who enjoyed anything without thanksgiving robbed God. The blessing asked, Jesus brake the bread and the fishes and gave to his disciples with the command that they distribute them among the people. This they did. There was only a small cake for a thousand guests and but a fragment of a dried fish; but in some mysterious way there was enough to go round, and all ate heartily and were satisfied. The bread and fishes multiplied in an unexplainable way. When

the meal was over Christ commanded that the fragments be gathered. The fragments were to be the palpable evidence of the miracle. The gathering of them was also intended to teach economy. When the fragments were gathered everybody saw that there was more at the end of the meal than there was at the beginning. Every one saw and felt that a notable miracle had been wrought. The saying that passed from lip to lip was, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." Convinced by the miracle that he was the Christ, the multitude at once determined to make him king. When Jesus saw the popular purpose he compelled his disciples to take a boat and cross over to the other side of the sea, and he himself went up into the mountain to spend most of the night in secret prayer and in religious retirement.

There are two points which it may not be amiss to notice :

(a.) *Christ does that only which his disciples cannot do.*

He expects their coöperation. They cannot multiply the loaves and fishes, so Christ does that. But they can distribute these among the multitudes, so Christ does not do that. Man can sow the seed in the field, so God does not do that ; man cannot give the increase, so God gives that when the seed is sown. In the great sphere of religion God does that which we cannot do, but he refuses to do that which we can do. Are we doing our part ?

(b.) *The use of blessings means the increase of blessings.*

The bread multiplied in the hands of the disciples during the process of distribution. This is an apt symbol of what takes place in the Christian life. The condition of increase is diffusion. To impart to others is to gain for one's self. Every honest effort to bring some other human heart into possession of Christ's love deepens our own sense of its preciousness. Every attempt to lead some other mind to the perception of the truth helps us to understand it better ourselves. If you would learn, teach. If you would get, give.

THE PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. *The God of redemption is the God of nature.*

One and the same God works in both spheres. This is what Jesus proves and demonstrates by this miracle. We need this point. It comforts us in two ways. It comforts us when we look at nature, and it comforts us when we look at redemption.

Deal with nature for a moment. When God created the universe he did not leave it. This is the feeble philosophy of some, but it is not the teaching of this Book. It is not the philosophy which makes nature a temple and man a worshipper. Is it not a comfort to know that the mighty forces of nature which terrify us are all under the control of our best Friend? Is it not a comfort to think that there is love and intention in everything which takes place in nature? The clouds are

God's chariot and the winds his steeds. He rides the storm and holds and handles the reins. He kindles the subterranean fires and orders the earthquakes. He timed the explosion which rent the rocks asunder and shook the earth when his Son was dying on Calvary. He meant the great rents in the rocks of Palestine to remain, as they do this day, the witnesses of Christ. Let me give one illustration to show the comfort coming from the thought that the God of redemption is the ruling power in nature, and that this God of redemption is the God of love as well as of power. The illustration is suggested by the fact that Jesus in his compassion multiplied bread for the hungry. Look at the little seed. The whole future food of the world is wrapped up in that little delicate thing. It looks like an awful risk to wrap up the food of the future in it. What is there that keeps us from sore foreboding and apprehension? It is the thought that God is with the little seed. It is the thought that the same Power which multiplied the loaves in the desert can multiply it according to his good pleasure. Our covenant God has wrapped up our food in the delicate little seed. This is the plan of infinite love and power. God steps out of nature in the person of his Son, and in the presence of thousands of witnesses wields the powers of nature and makes them produce bread on the spot, that we may see that he is the Lord of nature and that therefore all our interests in nature are safe.

The fact that the God of redemption is the

God of nature comforts us when we deal with redemption. It wheels all the powers of nature into line with our spiritual interests. It centres these all in Christ, who came to save us. It makes him a mighty Saviour, able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto him. Frequently do the psalms of the church take us to nature to see God there in his overmastering majesty and power. When we are impressed with his greatness they tell us that this God is our God, and we can trust in him and rest in him with perfect peace.

2. *We should ask God's blessing upon our food.*

Christ asked the blessing of God upon the meal which fed the multitudes. This he did before any of the company had partaken. In this he places before us an example. It is a helpful exercise to ask God's blessing upon our food, in that it cultivates the spirit of thankfulness and a sense of God's thoughtfulness and care over us. God is worthy of this honor.

God gave us the sense of taste just as he gave us the sense of sight, and as he has provided the world of beauty with its endless varieties to satisfy and please the sense of sight, so has he provided the world of flavor with its distinct varieties to please and satisfy the sense of taste. If you will agree as members of families to talk about everything that comes on your tables for a week, you will be surprised to find how much your table tells you God has done for you. Take each article of food by itself. The history of the apple, for example, which you see before you would be topic

enough for one meal. God works long and carefully in making every apple which we eat. He builds up a large tree for the purpose of making it. The energy and life of root and trunk and branch all go into it. Sunshine and air and dew and soil all contribute to its construction. All these work according to God's plan. And why does God build up the apple? That we may have it as food to enjoy. When we study the history of our daily food we see God at work for us in the waters of the earth, in the beasts of the field, in the clouds, in the sun, and in the soil. The food upon our tables is the result of the mighty working of this busy world of ours, and in many respects it is the sum total of its mighty power. Food is nature on its march to the highest forms of life. Food is nature entering into man that it may pass into thought and worship. Our daily meals bring us wonderful messages from God. Every flavor speaks of a separate plan of his and of a separate pleasure which he wishes to give us. To show us how willing he is that we shall eat and be satisfied, he tempts our appetites by putting his fruits in beautiful wrappings. He uses all colors and blends them in beautiful perfection. Purple and green and golden and crimson, all these are found in the fruits of the earth. Does God in this way speak to us by our tables; does he thus assure us of his love and forethought and desire concerning us? He does, and in so doing he puts us under obligation to give him our love and our gratitude. It is a duty to recognize him at our daily meals as the

Giver of good gifts. It is our duty to thank him for our appetites and for our health. It is our privilege to seek his blessing and to ask him for renewed consecration. Prayerlessness at the table of the man who believes that God has spread his table is a gross inconsistency.

3. *Fragments are worth gathering.*

It would have been a great mistake for the disciples of Christ not to have gathered the fragments after the miraculous meal. They would not have known how great the miracle was. The fragments were greater than the original supply. The fragments amounted to twelve basketfuls. How often is it the case in life that the fragment hours amount to more than full days. How often have men made themselves by using well the fragments of time. We do not value Hugh Miller as a stone-mason; we value him for his literary works. Let it be remembered that he raised himself from a stone-cutter, first to a geologist and afterwards to a man of letters, by the diligent use of fragment moments. Fragment moments of study were worth more than his whole days of stone-cutting. We value Michael Faraday not as a bookbinder, but as a scientist. But how did he become a scientist? By using his fragment hours in reading chemical books and making electrical machines. These hours did more than outweigh the days of book-binding. We do not value David as a shepherd; we value him as a musician. David's harp was his great power. It opened the way for him into the king's palace. It identified his name with

church music for all time. But David's skill in the use of the harp was the outcome of his fragment hours. When the sheep were safely folded his time was devoted to the harp. You know the value of these fragment hours spent in the cultivation of music. There is a window in one of the cathedrals of the Old World which is noted and popular. It was made by an apprentice in the shop of a glazier. That window, it is said, filled the master of the shop with grief, because it showed that his under-workman was superior to him. But what made the grief more poignant was this: the apprentice made the famous window out of broken fragments rejected and cast away in the shop. We have had illustration enough to exalt the value of fragments. What we want is to ask ourselves, What are we doing with our fragments? Are we gathering and using them? The fragments left from the dollar after we have made the requisite purchase would make a fine missionary contribution. Coming in week by week they would make dollars. The fragment of the day, after the shop or store or school is closed, would tell in the study of the Sabbath-school lesson or in reading of Church history or, if you have a voice for singing, in the cultivation of church music. Basketfuls on basketfuls of means would be the result if the Sabbath-school had the fragment coin spent in the sample-room and the cigar-store, spent on dyspepsia nicknacks and ridiculous gewgaws. Men of talent and women of influence would fill our churches if the hours wasted in frivolity and idle

gossip were spent in eager research after truth and in healthful study. These hours could be thus devoted, and there would still be time enough for work and play. What we want to impress upon our youth is this: Fragments are fortunes when they are carefully gathered.

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.

"AND JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE."

—*John 6:35.*

By six monosyllabic words he sets himself before the world. This is a specimen of masterly condensation. Only six words, and the supreme need of humanity defined! Only six words, and the paramount duty of the human race set forth! Only six words, and the absolute claims of the Son of God asserted!

The text is a simile, a parable, an analogue, a type. Into any of these forms of speech a thinking mind can pack a world of truth. We might liken the text to a drusic stone, which is a striking formation found among the rocks of nature. Mac-Millan tells us that in picking up one of these we pick up a rough, ordinary, boulder-like stone and expect little from it. But when it is cleft in twain, behold a marvellous sight! The commonplace boulder is a hollow sphere lined with beautiful crystals, which carry in them the glorious colors of sunrise. The text is, in the world of truth, what the drusic stone is among the rocks. When its interior is broken up by study and prayer and believing, we find in it thoughts and facts which are valuable and as beautiful as gold and onyx and sapphire and emerald.

In dealing with this description which Christ

gives of himself we must not, by literalness, let the figure which he uses confuse us. We must not take his words as though he taught literal cannibalism. This is the instruction which he gives us at the close of his discourse. He says "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The men who heard him interpreted his words literally, and asked the question, "How can he give us his flesh to eat?" They recoiled from the thought of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, and they forsook him. This led Christ to say, "Strive to catch the spirit and meaning of my figure; forget the figure itself by centring your minds on the ideas which it sets forth; when you grasp the idea which it contains, it will be eternal life to you." While the language of Christ is highly figurative, the idea which he sets forth is perfectly clear. It is this: He is to the soul of man what bread is to the body of man. He teaches us that the soul has hunger just as the body has, and that it must be fed. All life must be fed. The bodily life must be fed with the fruits of the earth; the social life must be fed with friendships and family affections; the business life must be fed with the competition of trade and the hope of gain; the intellectual life must be fed with knowledge. But there is a higher life, the soul-life. With what must it be fed? It must be fed with Christ, with his experience, with his personality, and with his life. By faith in him we must feast and nourish our souls on what he is and what he says and what he does—on his character, his words, his

sacrifice. Our souls must appropriate Christ as our body appropriates food.

We are familiar with the figure which Christ uses; let us therefore read into it simply what we are accustomed to read into it. We say that the tree eats air and light and drinks in the rain. We talk of devouring a book, of drinking in knowledge, of feasting upon a friend, of relishing a poem or a discussion. The figure on the lips of Christ is not a strange one; it is not even a new one. We meet with it in the Old Testament. We are exhorted "to taste and see that God is good." We are invited by Wisdom "to come and eat of her bread and drink of the wine which she has mingled." God is said "to satisfy the longing soul and to fill the hungry soul with goodness." The only thing that is new in the words of Christ is this: Christ declares that he is the food of the soul, and that he alone can satisfy its hunger.

As we cannot in one study set forth all the points of analogy between Christ and bread, let us confine our thinking to two points in the analogy.

I. AS BREAD SATISFIES THE HUNGER OF THE BODY, CHRIST SATISFIES THE HUNGER OF THE SOUL.

There is a soul-hunger in humanity, and the evidences of it are everywhere. Look at these evidences! Humanity is cross and irritable. This is the evidence of hunger. When the child is hungry, it is cross and irritable; so it is with the race. When the child is full and satisfied, it is good-natured; so it is with the race. The reign

of sensuality among men proves the hunger of the soul. Sensuality is the double feeding of the body. It makes the body do double, in hope that this will act as a substitute for feeding the soul. Excess, extravagance, luxury, large fortunes stored away, greedy monopolies, all these are the evidences of soul-hunger. Envy, pride, remorse, carking care, anxiety, disgust, fears, all these are evidences of soul-hunger. Alexander weeping because there are no worlds to conquer and fretting at the course of providence; Solomon flying from one great thing of earth to another great thing, and complaining of the emptiness of life and asking the question, Is life worth living?—what are these but the evidences of soul-hunger? But perhaps you ask me, How do you know that these are the evidences of soul-hunger? The process of reaching this conclusion is a very simple one. I contrast the men in whom these things are found with the men who feed upon Christ and whose souls are satisfied. These things are absent from the men who make Christ their portion. The men who live in the land of Beulah, and look at life from the summit of Mt. Delectable, never take up the cry of vanity nor ask the question, Is life worth living? To them life on earth is sublime, a magnificent gift from God. Their life is not spoiled by envy and remorse and carking care. They do not have to tax their body double. They delight themselves in God, and he has given them the desires of the heart. They are filled with the foretastes and anticipation of heaven. In the

words of Scripture, "They have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come." This is the point before us: There is a soul-hunger, and Christ satisfies that hunger.

(a.) *He satisfies the hunger of the intellect.*

The intellect wants definite knowledge, and Christ gives that. Paul tells us of the excellency of the knowledge that is in Christ Jesus. Christ answers the questions which are uppermost in the minds of men. Bancroft says that the questions which the Indians asked Eliot the missionary were the very questions which the Greek philosophers discussed. Christ answers these questions which trouble the race. We want to know who we are. He tells us that. He sets before us our potentialities. He tells us of our body and teaches us how to estimate this. He opens up the nature of the soul and discourses on its endless life. He brands as false the theory of the materialist that in death the soul becomes as unconscious as the grave dust.

We want to know our destiny, and he teaches us that our character will settle our destiny. We want to know of God, and how to get into true relation with God, and he tells us this. He reveals God as our Father. He bases his own earthly life upon the Fatherhood of God, and lives it from beginning to end consistently upon the filial idea. As a boy he starts forth with a grasp upon the Fatherhood of God: "I must be about my Father's business." He maintains this grasp when he enters the dark and trying places of life. In the

agony of Gethsemane it is "Father, not my will, but thine, be done." He maintains his grasp upon God's Fatherhood to the very end. In the conflict with death it is, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Christ gives us the grandest and fullest revelation of God, and he puts that revelation into one word, "Father."

Christ never refuses to answer the serious and earnest questions of the human mind. So anxious is he to give needed knowledge that he purposely calls out questions that he may answer them. Christianity means education. Christianity means mental triumphs. Christian civilization is a distinct and recognized factor in the world. Let us not overlook Christ's method in giving knowledge. His style is succinct. His teaching is seminal. His sayings are roots and seeds, not full-bloomed gardens. It takes ages to grow them. His style is lucid and attractive. He makes truth live in thrilling similes and talking pictures. He throws golden visions into the darkened mind, just as in nature he throws the sunburst of the morning into the dark night. He brings magnificent conceptions out of the realm of the abstract, and gives them a body so that we can see them and feel them. There is no grander conception than the Fatherhood of God. But see! He puts that before us in the parable of the Prodigal Son, and even the little child sees it and feels it. But above and beyond all this, in giving us knowledge he translates truth into incarnate principles. That is, he lives it.

His life is knowledge and truth, and by dealing with his life we get at the facts we want to know. Take one illustration. Look at the future as it is revealed in his life. I can make a meal of that future; nay, more, I feast upon the future as I see it in his life. I love to dwell upon certain scenes in his life: upon the transfiguration, his resurrection, his ascension. His empty tomb, his ascension, his glorified body—these satisfy me. They satisfy me, not merely because they reveal what Christ is, but because they open to me my future as a child of God. I shall be like him, for I shall see him as he is. Intellectually Christ satisfies us. We shall be satisfied to be like him in our thinking, to hold the doctrines which he holds, to have his views of God and of this life and of the future, and to be swayed by his conceptions and estimates of things.

(b.) *He satisfies the hunger of the conscience.*

The conscience is too large a part of the soul to be overlooked. A noted thinker has shrewdly and wisely said, "Man is built up around a conscience." We know one thing, and that is this, no power so sways a man as the power of conscience. A tormented conscience means hell. A conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ means heaven. The imperative need of man's life is to get a conscience full of peace. In a threefold way Christ satisfies the conscience.

His holy teachings satisfy the conscience. Take the sermon upon the mount. The purest conscience can delight in it. The sermon, by its

breadth and spirituality and practicality, educates the conscience and enlightens it. It make common and conventional moralities hideous.

The life he lived satisfies the conscience. When conscience searches his life through and through, it finds that he lived his own teachings. It finds a rhythmic consistency in his life. He who said, "Pray for them that persecute you," prayed for his enemies when they nailed him to the cross. Conscience finds in him all the graces which he inculcates. It finds in him moral beauty, conscientiousness, holiness of soul, pure and Godlike thinking, love of truth, freedom from carnality, and heavenly ideals. His character stands as the great power and defence of our religion. Infidelity may build up fortresses against Christianity out of our inconsistencies, it may spike the guns of apologists, but the holy and perfect character of Christ is a bulwark against which it breaks itself in pieces every time it clashes with it. The world has never known its equal. It is far above the sweep even of the imagination of those who deal in fiction and ideals. The writers of fiction are building characters every day, but even with his character before them they cannot produce its equal. Like the rainbow, which is the blending of all colors of light, his character is the blending of all moral and spiritual virtues and graces. His character is the fulfilment of the law, and affords a perpetual delight to God, who looks it through and through with an omniscient eye. Well then may it delight and satisfy the cravings of the conscience.

His sacrifice for sin satisfies the human conscience. Nothing else does or can satisfy a sin-stricken conscience. The condemning conscience sees him as its sin-bearer paying its debt and bearing its penalty. It sees itself in him as he goes to the cross. It sees Christ taking its law-place and dying as the sinner's surety. It hears with a bound of joy his shout, "*It is finished!*" for by that shout it learns that God has accepted the satisfaction which the surety has made. Paul knew the blessedness of this truth and the value of Christ as a sin-offering. Realizing his oneness with Christ on the cross, and feeling the thrill of peace and joy which comes to the forgiven soul and to the satisfied conscience, he raised the companion shout of the spiritual victor, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." That shout of the believer matches well the shout of Christ, "*It is finished!*" Since the sacrifice of Christ satisfies the righteousness of God, well may the demands of the human conscience be satisfied with it and rest in it.

(c.) *He satisfies the hunger of the heart.*

The human heart craves love and the assurances of love, companionship and the sympathies of companionship. These things it finds in Christ. He addresses himself to the heart as much as to the intellect. Who ever spoke words equal to his? Who ever sacrificed for friends as he sacrificed for his? Who ever gave sympathy like his sympathy? You cannot match his "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest," or his "In my Father's house are many mansions." You cannot match his sacrifice of the glories of heaven for a season and his death upon the cross for his friends. You cannot match his groaning of spirit and his tears of sympathy at Bethany. You cannot match his companionship with his disciples. He goes with them to their wedding scenes, he meets with them at their graves. He not only goes with them but takes them with him. He takes them with him into the wilderness to rest, he admits them into his solitudes, he instructs them secretly and opens to them the great purpose of his life. He allows John to recline upon his bosom, and he makes the chosen three his companions when he enters the glories of his transfiguration. The heart of man yearns for companionship. Jesus offers it the companionship of heaven, which means the company of God and the holy angels and the redeemed from every nation of the earth. The heart of man craves love. Jesus offers it his own intense love, and the love of the Father which is equally intense. He offers the soul of man the heart of God as its eternal home. If the infinite love of God cannot satisfy the heart of man, the heart of man cannot be satisfied. But it does satisfy man. Paul acting as man's representative makes this clear in the eighth chapter of Romans. In this self-contained chapter he places before the believer his security and his privileges. He begins with "No condemnation," and he closes with "No separation." He ends with the love of God

that is all-satisfying and eternal. This is his closing sentence, and every word in it breathes a serene satisfaction: "I am persuaded that neither life nor death, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

II. AS BREAD BECOMES LIFE TO THE BODY, CHRIST BECOMES LIFE TO THE SOUL.

It is well known that the bread we eat and masticate and digest becomes a part of the body and even the life of the body. This is one of God's mysteries which we do not attempt to explain. It is enough for us to see that it is a fact. "The bread that is eaten to-day does not remain bread. It turns to flesh and blood and bone. It is converted into nerve force and muscular energy, into heart-beats and hand-movements, into the far-sightedness of a Herschel, into the benevolent activities of a Howard, into human life. The bread of yesterday is the myriad-hued, the myriad-sided life of to-day. It is the eloquence of the orator and the strength of the drayman. It is the skill of the artist and the energy of the ploughman."

Now this transmutation of bread into life has its analogy in Christ when he is received by faith into the soul. He becomes honesty and truthfulness and praise and benevolence and self-sacrifice and sympathy and purity. The Christ-possessed

soul says with Paul, "The life which I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God. It is no longer I that live, but Christ who liveth in me." When we talk about Christ entering into his people and becoming their life, we are not talking of a fancy or a fiction, but of a fact. We know that one spirit dwells in, and lives through, another. We talk of the general living in his army. He has the power of filling the souls of his soldiers with his enthusiasm and courage. His daring burns in them, and finds its outcome in the rally and the charge. The enrapt scholar opens his heart to the admired teacher and becomes his animated image. He reproduces his mental habits and sympathies and theories. Christ enters into our nature just as the sun enters into the plant and works itself out into flowers arrayed in garments of gold and splendor.

At this point I imagine you say, "If Christ be in us as our life, we ought to be conscious of the fact." When we are instructed as to how to recognize Christ, we are conscious of it. You should drill yourself in recognizing the Christ formed within you. Is there something within you which demands that you shall be noble for nobility's own sake? That feeling is the Christ within you asserting himself. Is there a joy thrilling within you in the sanctuary as you sing praise and pray? That is Christ in you. It is the Christ who attended the synagogue on the Sabbath as was his wont, Christ who sang the grand Hallel after the Supper, Christ who went into the mountain still-

ness and spent whole nights in prayer. As you read the Word do you feel a response within you to what is written there? That is the Christ in your heart talking to the Christ on the page. Do you realize that there is something within your soul which looks out of your eyes at perishing sinners and seeks how it can help them? That is Christ yearning in your heart for the lost, and trembling for those who will not tremble for themselves. When Christ is within us, we may be conscious of the fact and get great comfort from it. When Christ is within us as our life, he will act in us and by us just as he acted when he lived in Judæa and Galilee. Being the same Christ, he must live in and by us the same kind of a life.

CLOSING POINTS.

1. *The simple term "bread" when used as descriptive of Christ contains in it touching pictures of Christ.*

The term sets before me *the self-sacrifice of the Son of God*. What is requisite upon the part of the golden wheat that it may become bread? It must leave its proud stalk, which waves in the sunlight, and submit itself to the flail of the thresher. It must give up its germinating power and its beauty of form. It must submit to the crushing and grinding of the mill. It must go into the kneading-trough and into the fires of the oven. It is through self-sacrifice that the golden wheat becomes bread. Likewise it is through sacrifice that the Son of God becomes the bread of life. He must veil the divine glory. He must become

incarnate. He must live the earthly life, with its testing sorrows and temptations. His body must be broken on Calvary. Scripture sums up what Christ did in order to become the bread of life in this one sentence, "He gave Himself for us." "HIMSELF!" what is included in this term? It includes the gift of a God, and the gift of a God is infinite. We grow eloquent when a man gives himself to a good cause — when a brakeman throws himself between death and the passengers, and at the cost of life averts a catastrophe, when the policeman receives the murderous knife into his own bosom, when the patriot soldier purchases liberty at the price of blood! We do well to grow eloquent over such gifts. But how much greater is the gift when the Son of God gives HIMSELF!

When Christ offers himself to me as the Bread of Life, I see in his offer the generous humility of the Son of God brought to view. If a scholar of wide culture should give himself the task of teaching a child of moderate endowments, in order that he might reproduce in him, in a limited measure, his own greatness, would you not call him a man of generous humility? His humility would appear all the more clearly if you saw the many great minds open to his tuition; willing minds, capable of reproducing him in the grandest of ways and in the highest circles of life. There are spheres other than the human in which the Son of God can live and reproduce himself. Heaven is His to use in the manifestation of Himself. The

angels are willing to be His students and to be His exponents. He might, if He wished, confine Himself to the towering heights of glory, but He does not. He comes to enter into us, to dwell in us, to manifest Himself in us, to reproduce Himself through us.

2. *The simple term "Bread" when used as descriptive of Christ contains in it explicit directions concerning our duty towards Christ.*

It is our duty to feed upon Christ, to make him ours by appropriating faith. It is not only our privilege but it is our duty to be Christ-filled. The possibility of being thus filled carries with it the duty. It is said that opaque objects can be charged so thoroughly with electricity as to become transparent. In like manner we can be filled with Christ so that he will glow, in the form of divine truth and love and purity, in all that we do. When the Shechinah is within us it will shed a halo of glory on the life without.

We should feed upon a whole Christ. We should take him in all his offices and bow to all his claims. We should accept of all his truths, and lay hold of his commandments and threatenings, as well as of his promises. We should live on the full gospel and honor every doctrine in it. It is our privilege to receive of Christ's fulness, grace for grace. In proportion as we take him in his fulness, in the same proportion shall we reach grandeur and spirituality of life, robustness in truth, and Christian likeness of character. It is the men who take the full Christ that are men of

large understanding and large sympathies and large sacrifice. There are Christians and Christians. The greater Christians are those who have the greater amount of the indwelling of Christ.

Do you ask, How can we feed upon Christ? I reply, The soul feeds by contemplation. By contemplation the thoughts of Christ enter into us and become a part of us. By contemplation the doctrines of Christ become convictions, and convictions are inseparable from our natures. Convictions transform us into themselves. To afford us the opportunity of contemplating Christ, God has given us the story of Christ in the gospel page, and the morning chapter from his biography should be deemed as essential as our morning meal. To make us realize more and more that Christ is ours, Christ himself has given us the Lord's Supper. As a holy ordinance it throws light upon eating Christ as the Bread of Life. It is meant to keep our memory full of what we have in Him. It has been given as a means of grace to strengthen us for right living. We must not lose sight of this in gathering at the Lord's table. We are in danger of looking at the Lord's Supper as an end, and of supposing that we must live a right life in order that we may celebrate it. This is only half of the truth. The right life will help us to celebrate it, just as the right life will help us to pray. The other half of the truth is, the celebration of the Lord's Supper will help us in living the right life. We should come to the Lord's table expecting to receive the quickening of all our Chris-

tian graces. We should come expecting to receive all the benefits which can be obtained by those who in the spirit, and not in the letter merely, "take and eat."

As we deal with Christ and enjoy him here on earth, let us remember that what we receive from Christ now is only an earnest of what shall be. There is a life beyond. There is the New Jerusalem, there is the celestial city, and the golden empire of which Christ is the King and the Life. In that realm the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed us and lead us unto living fountains of water. His words to us, as he opens the gates of knowledge into the heaven-world, are, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." Beautiful are the pictures which we can build up from the materials which he has given us. They are such as thrill the sanctified imagination. They are such as fill this life with hope and make it grand and sublime with anticipations. They are such as give us refreshment and regalement. These pictures are such as bring the tree of life down to earth, so that our faith can even now taste the twelve manner of fruits. As we taste these fruits by faith, we say, and our deepest convictions are in every word, "Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

CHRIST AT THE FEAST.

"IN THE LAST DAY, THAT GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST, JESUS STOOD AND CRIED, SAYING, IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME AND DRINK."—*John 7:37.*

THIS Scripture outlines Christ's sermon at the Feast of the Tabernacles. It sums it up in two thrilling sentences. These two sentences form one of those grand invitations of the Bible which sound like music from the harps of gold. The invitation proves its own divinity. It does this not merely by the poetic beauty of its diction, although it is the sublimest of poetry, but by its grand substance and sentiment. It has the ring of infinite love in it, and it expresses a purpose the breadth of which shows that it could originate only in the heart of God. The invitation harmonizes with the sacrifices of Calvary, and fits the lips of him who voluntarily went to Calvary and gave his life a ransom for many. In it Christ joins golden word to golden word, that he may draw us to salvation.

We would expect the Disciple of Love to report these words from the heart of Christ. They are just the words which his nature would cherish and remember and feed upon. It is noticeable that John gives us the greatest number of the broad universal invitations and promises and declarations of the gospel. They are scattered through his

writings from beginning to end. They burn like brilliant lamps in the long drawing-room of a palace. In the beginning of his writings he puts this magnificent verse which voices the love of the Father: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In the centre of his writings he puts this verse, which voices the infinite longing of the Son, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; and the water which I give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." At the close of his writings he puts this verse, which makes the Holy Spirit one with the Father and Son in longing for the salvation of all: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The Disciple of Love builds up a lofty and complete pyramid of grand universal promises and invitations. Thus he represents aright God's infinite love and the magnificence of his great saving purposes. Thus he sets forth the very important fact, viz., that if we are lost, we are lost because we refuse to be saved.

Let us bring before us the surroundings amid which Christ preached his sermon. The nation was celebrating the Feast of the Tabernacles. This was one of the most popular of the feasts. Edersheim, who has given the world perhaps the best work on the Jewish worship, says, "This was preëminently the feast for foreign pilgrims."

It took place during the finest season of the year. The delicious cool of autumn, when the first streaks of gold and crimson were tinting the foliage, was just the season for travel. Because of the presence of the foreign Jews, who came from the far-away regions, it was the most largely attended of all the feasts. The greater the crowds, the more fitting the occasion for the utterance of Christ's universal offer, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

The design of the feast was twofold. It was meant to be a thanksgiving for the gathered harvest of the year, and also a memorial of the wilderness-life which the Hebrews lived before God settled the nation in the promised land. In the wilderness the fathers dwelt in tents, so as a memorial of this their descendants dwelt in booths or tents made of the branches of trees during the entire week of the feast. These leafy tents were built upon the flat-roofed houses and in the yards and in the open squares of the city. Jerusalem was transformed. It became a city of trees. The city was picturesque and grand to one who took a bird's eye view of it from the summit of Olivet. It looked as though the nation intended to crown it with fresh green laurels. It was full of intense life. It was a centre of prayer and worship. Faith saw the mystic ladder of Bethel reared against the skies, and innumerable troops of angels sweeping up and down on ministries of love. This was the season when Jerusalem was the city of solemnities; when worshippers congregated by the thousands;

when the sacred places were filled with chanting processions; when the smoke of smouldering sacrifices rose in a slowly widening column to float between the summits of Olivet and Sion; when the silvery Psalms reverberated through the courts of the Temple and the clear blasts of the priestly trumpets awakened echoes far and near among the surrounding hills. The season was one of holy scenes and holy acts and holy thoughts. To see Jerusalem at its best you must see it when the nation is holding one of the great festivals. It is thus that we see it in this Scripture. The very climax of the Feast of the Tabernacles has been reached. The last, the high day, has been reached. Soon the booths must be dismantled and the tribes start homeward. The thought of the end quickens every soul and gives zest to every service.

At the point where we take up the story we find the nation engaged in a most thrilling rite, viz., the memorial of the Smitten Rock, in which water was poured out before the Lord. This memorial was attended with striking ceremonies. A company of white-robed priests and Levites marched in solemn procession from the Temple courts to the Fountain of Siloam. When this fountain was reached the priest filled a golden pitcher with the living water, and then the sacred procession marched back to the Temple amid the clash of cymbals and the shouts of the multitude. The march was so timed that the solemn procession reached the Temple just as the morning

sacrifice was laid upon the altar of burnt-offering. In the presence of the people the priest took the golden pitcher, lifted it on high, and poured out the water so that it mingled with the sacrifice. With a great voice the multitudes sang, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," and all the people waved the palm branches which they carried as a token of their joy. The services closed with the chanting of the grand Hallel, consisting of the praise Psalms, beginning at the one hundred and thirteenth and ending with the one hundred and eighteenth. It was during the pause after this thrilling service, and while the priests were making ready for the special sacrifices of the day, that Jesus spake to the multitudes. His voice rang out from the solemn hush and offered to the thousands the water of life. He proclaimed himself the Rock of Ages, the reality of what was here presented in the form of type. It was a bold thing for him to do, but he could not help it. Infinite love compelled him. A consciousness of what he was, and a clear apprehension of the worth and efficacy of his coming sacrifice, compelled him. By this act he passed from the extreme of caution to the extreme of daring. He took a great step in advance in declaring himself.

Thus we see that Christ made the occasion furnish his sermon. It gave him the figure by which to set himself forth as equal to the wants of the soul. The figure will last and speak to the end of the world. It can never be outgrown. This was

just the place for Christ to declare himself. He was in the midst of his own pictures. These Temple services were all declarations concerning him. They were the gospel in symbol and type. They presented in abstract form precisely the same facts and thought which he presented in his words, in his character, and in his life. This was the reason that these services satisfied and fed such great natures as David's and Isaiah's and Jeremiah's, and also the hearts and minds of the other heroes of the Old Testament. This was the reason they called out the grand old Psalms, so full of majestic thought and soaring aspirations and swelling gratitude. The Hebrews in their worship had before them the Christ whom we see in our worship, and he made their worship grand. He was before them in the form of symbol, just as he is before us to-day in the Lord's Supper in the form of symbol. Christ simply proclaimed this fact when he surprised and thrilled the crowds by his invitation given amid the solemnities of the Feast of Tabernacles, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Let us endeavor to set the fulness and meaning of this Scripture before us.

I. THE INVITATION OF CHRIST.

We can best set the invitation of Christ before us by asking and answering two questions.

Question 1. *To what does Christ invite us?*

He invites us to come unto him and receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

It is the gift of the Holy Spirit that is symbolized by the gift of the water of life which Christ offers. And what is the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? It is the great gift of Christ which carries in it all other gifts. It is the gift of all the blessings of the Christian dispensation in which we are living. It includes everything that pertains to the divine life. When Christ finished the work of redemption he committed everything to the Spirit, whom he sent to be his vicegerent on earth, and to whom has been committed the application of redemption. By the Spirit Christ now carries on his work here, and is a perpetual living presence. The promise of the Spirit was his grand distinctive promise. This is in accordance with prophecy. Joel foretold that the New Dispensation would be marked by the privileges of such influence of the Spirit as the Old had not seen. The power of the Holy Ghost was the distinctive promise of the New Testament, and the fulfilment of the promise was to be accomplished by wonders and thus made notable. The application of Christ's completed work is the Spirit's distinctive work. It was the distinctive work of the Son of God to come and offer the sacrifice on the cross; it is the distinctive work of the Spirit to come and make that sacrifice effective. When Christ ascended to heaven the Spirit came to do his office work. As the Son of God came in the fulness of time and incarnated himself in a human body, the Spirit came on Pentecost and incarnated himself in the individual saint and in the collec-

tive organic company of believers called the Church of God, the body of Christ.

How do you know that this is the true interpretation of the offer which Christ made at the Feast of Tabernacles? It is the interpretation which the inspired John gives when he records Christ's invitation. His words are, "This he spake of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John wrote after the scenes of Pentecost, and while in possession of the very gift which Christ promised. He enjoyed the fulness of the Spirit which Jesus had promised and of which the prophets had spoken. He read into the promise all the meaning of later events and revelations. Thus he teaches us how we are to deal with the Scriptures, how we are to interpret them, and what we are to read into them. We need the lesson which he gives us. If we do not act according to it we shall limit many parts of the Bible and make them mean less than they do. There are some who are not willing to allow us this canon of interpretation, viz., *It is our privilege to read Scripture in the light of after events.* They would allow us to see in the different parts of Scripture only what those to whom it was first given saw in it. John is good enough authority to put against all such. He read all the meaning of later events into the offer of the water of life by Christ. We are not reading Scripture for the men away back in the past; we are reading it for ourselves; and it is common sense to throw all the

light and meaning possible into every word and sentence of it. For example, we are to let the resurrection of Jesus and the teachings of Jesus concerning immortality illumine the sayings in the Old Testament which deal with the future life. We are to allow them to magnify the translation of Enoch and the ascension of Elijah. We are to let them make the symbolism of nature vocal, to give a voice to the grain of wheat which germinates and reproduces. We are to let them make the Psalms which we sing great with meaning when the sentiments of these Psalms look beyond the grave. For example, we are to read a new meaning into the sixty-eighth and twenty-fourth Psalms under the illumination which they receive from the ascension of Christ. We are to read this promise of the water of life in the light of Pentecost, with its incoming of the Spirit in wondrous power. We are to read it in the light of the Spirit-filled lives of Paul and Peter and John. The realization of the promise in these men shows us what the promise means.

Since Christ uses the water of life as a figure of the Spirit, there must be some correspondence between water as a figure and the Spirit as the reality. This is what you are saying to yourselves. And this is true. There are correspondences. We can indicate only two, and these only by way of suggestion.

(a.) *Water is a beautifier, so is the Spirit.*

Much of the beauty in nature comes from water. The true artist understands this, so he

never paints a landscape without putting a bubbling spring or a rolling brook or a sweeping river in it. The divine Artist when he paints the picture of the heavenly Canaan makes much of the River of Life. Gather up the beauties of nature and see what they are. They are such as these: the gems of morning, the sparkling dew-drops, the cataract with its waterfall and crystal spray, the purling brook rippling and singing, the placid lake mirroring the blue sky, the rainbow on the lowering brow of the storm, the glories of cloud-land with its peaks of aurelian and silver and its valleys of purple and crimson. Water is a beautifier. If you took it from nature, nature would be bare and repulsive. To meet and answer the analogy introduced by Christ, the Spirit must be a beautifier. He is. He carries with him the beauties of holiness, and as the Spirit of holiness he communicates these unto those in whom he dwells. The product of his indwelling is a beautiful character. Take and examine, for illustration, the character of Christ. That was his production. Christ lived his human life just as we are to live our human lives, by the power of the Spirit and through his guidance. Into the likeness of Christ's character the Spirit is moulding and transforming all the people of God. Into Christ's character the Spirit blended all beautiful graces, such as obedience, integrity, love, truth, joy, courage; these are all in it, and they are in it in perfection and in perfect harmony. No Rubens or Angelo ever gave the world a picture half so

thrilling as the perfect character of Jesus Christ, which is the incorporation of all moral and spiritual beauty. This is what Christ offers us. He offers us the power of the Holy Ghost which built up the character of Christ. The Spirit is the beautifier. In nature he is represented as brooding over chaos and bringing from it cosmos, and as renewing the face of the earth and bringing forth the fresh beauty of the springtime. In grace he it is who sanctifies us and transforms us into fac-similes of Jesus Christ.

(b.) *Water is a vivifier, so is the Spirit.*

The Tree of Life grows on the banks of the River of Life. Water revives the dying Ishmael. The summer shower fills the grasses and the flowers with new beauty and vitality. Wherever water is found it is the symbol of life. The floating mists, the gurgling rills, the broad rivers, all of these carry in them life and refreshment. To meet and answer the analogy introduced by Christ, the Spirit must be a vivifier. He is. He is called the Spirit of Life. He is set forth as performing all the subjective work of salvation in man. He quickens and regenerates and sanctifies. If you liken him to a fountain, you can see the many rills which flow from him into the souls of men. They are such as these: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, temperance. These graces constitute the very life of a Christian, and these graces are communicated by the indwelling of the Spirit.

The works of the Spirit bear testimony to him as a reviver. He fertilizes every part of the soul.

He fertilizes the affections by shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts. Look at the affections of a Christian home as these go out Godward and manward, and you will see the fruitage of the Spirit. He fertilizes the will and makes it capable of new measures of self-sacrifice. Look at the martyrs who face death, and you will see the product of the Spirit's operation. No force hostile to Christ can crush their will. The fires crackle in their limbs, but their last look, until the eye shrivels in its socket, is upward. So completely is the Spirit the source of life that we are said "to live in the Spirit" and "to pray in the Spirit" and "to walk by the Spirit." Our life is inspired by the Spirit. He creates the atmosphere in which we live our new and divine life. Whatever comes forth from him is vigorous and fresh, and is like sweet, cool, sparkling, clear, living water from the spring. The worship which he inspires is like the worship of heaven for purity; the praise which comes from his indwelling is like the anthems of the redeemed; and the prayer which he indites is full of faith and energy, and always prevails at the throne of grace.

Question 2. *What result follows the acceptance of Christ's invitation?*

This is the result: The indwelling Spirit will make us like Christ. We ourselves will become fountains of life. Through the indwelling of the Spirit Christ becomes re-incarnated in us. As in nature God puts into the rocks healing and life-giving waters which flow for centuries, so in the

work of grace he puts his life within us in an un-failing form. Christ by the Spirit enters into us and lives through our personality and individuality. The life of the church is but the attempt of Christians to rise to the completer life of Christ.

The promise of Christ accords with what we find elsewhere in the Word, viz., fellowship between man and God always makes man profitable. God took Abraham into covenant with him, and that covenant relation made him a blessing unto all nations. Who have been the men who have blessed the world? They have been the men who have come out of the world and out of their own corrupt selves, and who have lived with God and have allowed God to live in them. They have been such men as the heroes of the Old and New Testaments. Such men have been described by the Lord himself as trees of life, lights of the world, fountains of living waters.

The promise of Christ presents a beautiful ideal of the Christian's life. His life in the moral and spiritual world should be a spring of water. We see what it ought to be and what it can be. The Christian is a man who gives himself to others; he gives them his ideals and his principles; he gives them his society and his presence, that in this way he may breathe his spirit into them. Like Christ he is willing to empty himself for others. It is the mission of his life to lift others to his covenant privileges and to his faith in Christ. Going to heaven alone is a selfish

thing. Take others with you. I always remember the remark of a child when the older people were discussing in her presence Bunyan's Christian and Christiana. She said, "I do not like Christian nearly so well as I do Christiana." When she was asked, "Why?" she replied, "Christian went to the Celestial City alone, but Christiana took the children with her." That was a good enough reason for liking Christiana better than Christian. God will delight in you all the more when you take others with you to heaven, and even men will think the better of you. The Christian who goes to heaven alone will have a crown, but it will be a starless crown. The Christian who takes others with him to heaven will have a crown all filled with gems. Be a fountain of life to others. Take others to heaven with you.

II. THE DISCUSSION WHICH THE INVITATION OF CHRIST CALLED FORTH CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Christ's invitation brought him and his claims before the people. When he made his magnificent overture, they understood him as laying claim to the Messiahship. A discussion immediately ensued which brought out the various opinions entertained concerning him. His sermon made a commotion, and the commotion may be looked upon as a typical illustration of the effects of all gospel messages. We have here the typical minds of humanity. We have acting here the very motives which act to-day as men deal with

Christ. All did not think alike. All do not think alike to-day, although we have the light and the testimony of many centuries. Although we have Christ working himself out before men in all the grand institutions of the ages; although the world is reaping golden harvests from his gospel; much as Christ is exhibited, much as he is preached, much as he works before the eyes of nations, much as is known of him, still men do not think alike with regard to Christ and his claims. Look at these disputants at the Feast of the Tabernacles, and you will see something of the diversities of modern days as men come into contact with Christ and his claims.

(a.) *Some were favorably disposed towards Christ.*

They said that "he was a prophet." They saw much in him, but they did not see all that was in him. They ranked him perhaps with Moses or Elijah, but they did not see his divinity. They would take him as a human model, but they were not willing to accept of him as their Lord.

(b.) *Some pronounced favorably upon him without any intention of coming into any vital relation with him.*

They made him a mere intellectual problem. They dealt with him as a historical fact and nothing more. They pronounced upon him as they would upon George Washington or Napoleon. They said, for example, "Never man spake as this man spake." We have his words and can see for ourselves that this was a correct judgment,

but it meant nothing upon the part of the men who uttered it so far as personal living was concerned.

(c.) *Some saw him just as he was, and accepted him for what he claimed to be.*

(d.) *Some openly rejected him, and gave their reasons for so doing.*

He did not realize their ideal, so they said. They marked out an ideal of the real Christ. They constructed their ideal: "Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was." With this ideal before them they turned to Jesus and said, "This Jesus is from Nazareth, and is a Galilean." They did not know the true history of Jesus. He was just what they claimed the true Christ would be. He was of the seed of David, he was born in Bethlehem. Thus it is when men honestly make out an ideal, Christ accords with it. He answers the highest conception of men.

(e.) *Some judged him wholly by his followers, and rejected him.*

None of the big men of the nation believed on him, therefore there was nothing great in him. How often men to-day urge the character of the followers of Christ as a reason for not espousing his cause. And yet the bold fact is this: Men are everywhere imperfect. There are no perfect men on earth. If this be the logical course to follow, we must renounce and let alone every good thing, for imperfect men are connected with every good thing. There are none but imperfect

men to represent causes and things and systems and ideas and institutions.

(f.) *Some trusted him secretly, but had not the courage to boldly say what they thought.*

They were secret followers. Nicodemus was of this type. There are such men to-day. They are secretly trusting Christ; he is the hidden spring of their life; he deserves the credit of every good thing in them, but he does not get the credit because of their secrecy. Now this is not honest. It is not square to Christ. It is not square to others. Others look at the character worn by the secret disciple and say, "This character is good enough for me, and is something quite apart from and independent of religion." They are deceived. This character can never be built up apart from faith in Christ. Nicodemus, your very goodness is a living lie, and allures your fellow-men to destruction. Tell your fellow-men that you owe all to Christ. By an open confession become an honest man.

CHRIST AND THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD.

"BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM."—*John 8:58.*

THIS whole chapter is one Scripture, and in it Christ paints his own portrait. I am glad that Jesus speaks for himself, for by so doing he sets aside the many self-appointed representatives who speak for him. Many of these representatives so modify his claims that they level him to the grade of Mohammed and Buddha and Confucius. In the light of this Scripture I am prepared to say, "Jesus Christ would rather that men should reject him *in toto* than that they should receive him only as the equal of Mohammed or Buddha or Confucius. The difference between believing in him as a Mohammed or a Buddha or a Confucius, and believing in him as the Son of God, is the difference between offering him blasphemy and offering him worship.

HOW DOES CHRIST PAINT HIMSELF?

1. *He paints himself as the spiritual liberator of man.*

Christ does not ask men to serve him unrewarded. He crowns discipleship with blessings. Continuance and diligence under his tuition result in a greater grasp of the truth, and a greater grasp of the truth results in greater mental liberty. The

mind of man is the great power in this world ; it makes and determines the character and condition of humanity. Thought is the force that rules and directs the mind. Christ takes hold of the thought of man, and through thought controls his mind and liberates and elevates and blesses. He puts truth into his soul, and in this way makes the life right. He brings man into the service of the truth, and in this way sets him free from the slavery of error.

Do you ask, What is truth? Christ answers, "I am the Truth." Hence Christ in you is Truth in you. Hence we read that freedom by the Son of God and freedom by the Truth are one and the same thing. Christ—his ideas, his purposes, his Spirit, his sympathies, his example—Christ made up of these things, *he is the Truth*. When a man knows these things to be a part of himself, that man enjoys the truest and highest liberty.

This was the fact which Jesus set before the Jews. But they could neither apprehend it nor appreciate it. They denied that they were in slavery. The only liberty they dreamed of was political liberty, and they began talking about that. They began boasting about their national history, and tried to show that they had never been in bondage to any man. In doing so they found it convenient to be untruthful by leaving out great historical facts—facts such as the Egyptian bondage and the Babylonian captivity, and the fact of their own day, namely, that the Roman eagle had its talons fastened in the very heart of the nation.

This was their boast: "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man."

Christ was equal to the task of answering their appeal to Abraham as their father. He admitted the greatness of Abraham, but at the same time pointed out the fact that their descent from him was carnal and not spiritual. Abraham had two sons, one born in the covenant, Isaac; the other born out of the covenant, Ishmael. In spirit the Jews were Ishmaelites.

We have our spiritual affinities, and these determine our true relationships and standing. The Jews were not the children of Abraham's good qualities, they were not the children of faith and love; they were the children of the spirit of untruth and murder. These were the qualities of the devil and not of Abraham. The devil is the father of untruth. He lied to Eve in the garden of Eden and to Christ on the mountain of temptation. The devil is the father of the spirit of murder. He tried to murder the whole human race spiritually. The slavery in which he keeps man to-day is nothing short of murder. The drunkard is his slave, and his career ends in eternal death. Every picture which the Bible gives us of the devil goes to prove that he is a murderous taskmaster. Mark what he takes and mark what he gives. He takes Paradise and gives an apple. He takes the birth-right and gives a plate of pottage. He takes the homage of Samson and gives him sightless eye-balls. He is the same devil to-day, and he will treat you as he treated Eve and Esau and Samson.

The disposition which the Jews manifested towards Christ was altogether un-Abrahamic: it was Satanic, and Christ told them so. He traced their pedigree back to Satan, and then he offered them freedom from the Satanic.

It is worth while to take with us the lesson which Jesus sets in the light when he strikes down the boast of the cruel and unbelieving Jews who say, "We be Abraham's children." It is this: True sonship is spiritual, not carnal. True family likeness consists in character and in actions, not in bearing the same name. Sometimes descendants are a spiritual burlesque upon ancestors. The life which they live makes the name which they bear a laughable farce. Think of a puny sickly dwarf bearing the name of Goliath. Think of a man bearing the honored name of Stephen, of Paul, of James—men who died for the church—and yet living outside of the church and despising it. By our lives and principles and character we often slander the men whom we delight to call our fathers. We are often un-Abrahamic while we boast that we are the children of Abraham. Instead of being in truth the sons of Abraham, we are the slaves of Satan and have need of the liberty which Christ gives his people by the truth.

Let me ask a practical question at this point. Just what is the liberty which Christ gives men through the truth? It is a liberty which breaks every shackle. We can best see it if we look at one of Christ's freemen. It incarnates itself in all

such, and when it becomes incarnate it is no negative personality. Paul may be chosen as an answer to the question.

As we become acquainted with Paul's life through his words, we find it full to overflowing with the spirit of freedom. He had freedom from false theologies, and from the condemnation of the law, and from the fear of death, and from anxieties with regard to the things of this life, and from caste prejudices, and from the tyranny of the world, and from the power of evil habits, and from low and carnal views of the Christian's privileges and of the Christian's Christ. Now this is not picture painting, this is not declamation; this is simply the assertion of facts taken from the life of Paul. Here is the life of Paul, full, broad, manly, built up after magnificent ideals, replete with the peace of God, beautiful with the reproduction of Christly characteristics, and magnificent with noble sacrifices for the elevation of the human race. If this be liberty through Jesus Christ, who would not be one of Christ's freemen? Who would not be Paul on earth and Paul in heaven?

The Jews thought that they were already free, but they were not. This is the mistake of many who are not Jews. This is the mistake which many in the Christian Church make. They are not nearly so free as they think they are. Are you free? Your Christian profession says, Yes. But what does your life say? How do you perform the duties of the Christian life? Answer that question and you will see in what degree you

are free. To the free Christian everything is a privilege: church-going, Bible-reading, prayer, religious contributing, personal service. There is a great difference between doing things under compulsion and doing the same things because they are privileges. Privileges are duties transfigured. There is very little virtue in things done after the former manner. Said a man to his friend, "Would you like to live in a community where no man drinks intoxicating liquors, and where all are sober?" The friend replied, "Yes, I would be delighted to move into such a community." "And would you think more highly of the community if I told you that every man in it was industrious, rising regularly and retiring regularly?" "I certainly would." "And would the community grow in your estimation if you were told that there was no work done in it on the Sabbath day and that every one attended church?" "Yes. Such a community would be a place of perfect liberty. Find me such a community, and I will move into it to-morrow. But there is no such community on earth." Replied his friend, "Since you want to know of such a community, I will tell you where you will find one. You will find one at Sing Sing. Any well-regulated penitentiary is such a community." To many professed Christians the gospel, with its pure and holy duties, is nothing more than a penitentiary. They wear a penitentiary look and do their duties under compulsion. To them the gospel life is nothing more than a penitentiary routine. I know several such

Christians. They attend prayer-meeting under compulsion, when they do attend; they labor in the Sabbath-school under compulsion, when they do labor; they contribute to the Lord's cause under compulsion, when they do contribute. Let me speak plainly to all such: your great need in life is to get converted. Notwithstanding your religious respectability and your outward profession, you are in absolute need of the true indwelling of the true Christ, the Christ of the great sacrifice of Calvary. When the true Christ dwells within you he will bring you into the liberty of the sons of God and will change religion from a drudgery into a delight.

2. *He paints himself as the eternal God. "Before Abraham was, I am."*

This is a great step in advance. It is the highest claim that Jesus makes. It is the highest claim because there is nothing beyond for Jesus to claim. There is nothing beyond the eternal God.

The skilful manner in which Jesus opened the way for this amazing claim should not escape us. He did not make it suddenly; he laid a foundation for it. He reached it step by step. The Jews tried to minimize him by contrasting him with Abraham. This led him to proclaim his superiority to Abraham. The claim of superiority to Abraham was the first wide step which he took, and it prepared the way for the second wide step, the claim of equality with God, identification with the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

But how did Jesus claim superiority to Abra-

ham? Recall his words and you will see. These are his words: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." He asserts that He was so far in advance of Abraham in being and in work that by association with Him Abraham was elevated and filled with gladness. But how did Abraham see him and his day? One answer is, Abraham was in heaven when the Son of God left the seat of glory and came to earth. He saw the return of the trooping bands of angels whose faces flashed out in the sky above the plains of Bethlehem and whose voices sang the anthem of incarnation, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will towards men." All heaven was stirred from its centre to its outermost rim over the coming of Christ to earth and over the great work which brought him among men. Abraham was in the midst of this stir. If Moses and Elijah came all the way from heaven to earth to talk with Christ about his earthly mission and to bring him the sympathy of the redeemed, if all heaven knew about Christ's coming sacrifice on Calvary, it is inconceivable that Abraham, a towering chief of God, should be shut out from knowledge.

This is one answer. There is another answer. You find it upon the page of Old Testament history. There we are taught that the Son of God did not always maintain invisibility prior to Bethlehem. Under the former religious economy he fellowshiped with men. He walked with Adam in Eden and communed with him in the cool of

the day. Quite a company of the Old Testament heroes saw him wearing the form of a man and had dealings with him. On one occasion he was seen by seventy elders; upon two occasions he was seen by a man and his wife: Joshua saw him, Ezekiel saw him, Gideon saw him, Daniel saw him, and Abraham saw him. There is quite a long chapter in the Old Testament concerning his visit to Abraham: how he found his tent; what Abraham was doing; how he was received; how a kid was dressed and cakes were baked; how he ate and refreshed himself at Abraham's table; even a report is given of the conversation which passed between them. Studying the Old Testament history of Abraham, Paul says, "The gospel was preached unto Abraham;" and the promise given to Abraham, namely, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," was nothing more nor less than the promise of Christ.

From the declaration of superiority to Abraham, the Jewish ideal of superior human greatness, Jesus passes to the declaration of his equality with God. I wish you to notice how emphatic he makes his declaration, and how he throws all the moral earnestness of his entire being into it. I am particular as to this because there are religious teachers who publicly assert that Jesus Christ is not divine and that he never claimed deity for himself. Standing before this Scripture I assert that Jesus Christ took his oath that he was God. An oath is wrapped up in the word verily. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was,

I AM!" I am not trying, just now, to prove the deity of Christ; I am striving only to get Christ's idea of himself, to reach what Christ claimed to be. His claims, every one of them, I believe are established by infallible proofs. I believe in them all as firmly as I believe in my own existence. I am striving only to answer the question, What is the true Christ? I am aiming at unmasking all false Christs. The Christ out of whom deity is left is a false Christ. He is nothing more than a Christ of human fiction. He is not the Christ of the Book nor the Christ of history. The Christ whose face looks out at us from this gospel page is a divine Christ. The Jesus who speaks to us in the text says that he is the I AM! The term "I AM" in the text is the name of God. It is a name with a history. God took it, or rather announced it, at the burning bush. When God appeared to Moses at the burning bush and commissioned him to deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt, Moses asked the Lord, "What is thy name? For the people will ask me, Who sent you? What shall I say?" The Lord answered Moses, "'I AM' is my name. Tell them the 'I AM' sent thee." When the commission of Moses was executed, and when Israel through it had become a mighty nation, the name "I AM" was ever afterwards considered one of the grandest names of God. It stood chief among all the divine names. The covenant people saw in it everything that was great. It expressed to them God's personality. It set God forth as self-existent

and uncreated, as unchangeable and eternal. To them it was an incommunicable name, and set forth incommunicable attributes. When Jesus of Nazareth used it and appropriated it to himself, and claimed all that it expressed, the Jews were horrified and looked upon him as a blasphemer. Instinctively they took up stones to stone him and thus execute upon him the sentence which their law required them to execute against every blasphemer.

Brethren, the Jews were not mistaken. They did not misinterpret Christ. He did claim to be the eternal God, and he is the eternal God. Try to express God in a human life, and you can give the world nothing higher than Jesus Christ. Try to express Jesus Christ fully and absolutely, and you will give the world a perfect God. Study thoroughly the Christ as he moves and acts in gospel story, and you will find that he loves with an infinite love, and makes Godlike sacrifices and performs divine works and speaks divine words and lives a divine life. What more can we ask than this? Having this, we have in Christ "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person."

CONCLUSION.

Christianity's Christ is a distinct and a well-defined person.

Everything about him is sharply cut and fearlessly stated. He speaks for himself. He entraps no man into discipleship. He is not afraid of the

light nor of the witness stand. He asks no blind faith, but submits himself to scrutiny. He works himself out in the grand institutions of the ages, and complacently demands an equation for these. He makes men know exactly what they accept when they accept of him. The laws, the duties, the principles, and the sacrifices which pertain to his kingdom are all expressed in definite form. The Christ of Christianity is well defined. Is our faith in him as well defined? Is our choice of him as definite? Is our loyalty to him as sharply cut and as distinct? Are the features of our Christian life as prominent as are the features of his character? Our Christianity should be no vague thing, for the Christ of the Gospel is no vague person. The Christ of this picture is a grand Christ. His characteristics are so magnificent that they crown Christian faith with dignity. The man who accepts of the Christ here portrayed cannot fail to be a man all on fire with Christian enthusiasm and a man thoroughly absolute in his devotion to the truth. He will be a Christian of the broadest and loftiest type. The man with a broad Christ is a broad man. The man with a true Christ is a true man. The Christ and the man always correspond.

CHRIST AND THE BLIND MAN, OR THE TESTIMONY OF EXPERIENCE.

"ONE THING I KNOW, THAT WHEREAS I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE."

John 9:25.

THIS chapter is a complete history in itself. It is a great help in settling the claims of Christ. It introduces a method of testing Christ which is within the capacity of all, viz., the practical method.

It puts this method in contrast with the method of testing Christ by philosophizing and theorizing and reaching conclusions by the mere intellectual process. The contrast shows the immense superiority of the practical method. By this method an unlettered beggar can reach truth which the educated schoolman may never reach. By this method he can attain the logic of facts, before which the logic of theory is utterly powerless.

This chapter lays down and illustrates this principle for all time, viz., What Christ does proves what Christ is. If Christ does divine things, then Christ is divine. Christ can afford to be put upon his merits and judged. He can afford to say, as he does say, "Let my works speak. Believe me for my works' sake." The practical test displays great fearlessness, but then it has no cause for fear; it is in no danger of failure. It works well, for no man has ever used it honestly

and failed to find the truth about Christ. He who tests Christ by experience will always reach that faith which makes Christ a reality and an indwelling, conscious, controlling influence.

This is the fact which this chapter teaches. Here is a poor blind man who deals practically with Christ. He submits himself to Him and does what He tells him, and he receives the power of sight. The work of Christ on him and within him shows him what Christ is, and begets within him a deep-seated, immovable conviction concerning His nature and His claims.

THE FACTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE BLIND MAN.

1. *The conversation which Christ and his disciples held concerning the man.*

Jesus and his disciples found this man by the wayside begging. He was a penniless beggar. He lived on the cold charity of the world. More than that, he was blind. He had always been helpless, for he was born blind. To be blind is to lose half of creation. Blindness renders half the works of God meaningless blanks. The heavens are resplendent with shining worlds and twinkling stars and golden clouds, but the blind do not know it. The towering mountains have a majesty and the blooming valleys are robed in beauty and the waterfalls are adorned with flashing rainbows, but the blind do not know it. There is love-light in the eyes of friends and a talking soul in the human face, but the blind do not know it. There is a world of graceful forms and a world of bril-

liant hues, but the blind do not know it. Blindness shuts out from life the grand and beautiful, the bright and glorious. It makes the universe as black as pitch and as unattractive. The lot of the hero of this story was that of a blind man. He was blind in the dark ages of blindness. Blind as he was, he would have been better off if he had been living to-day. This is the golden age for blind men; the influence of Christ in the world has made it such. Invention has broadened the universe for the sightless. They get light now through their finger-tips. Books with raised letters have opened new worlds to them. Industries whereby they can obtain an honest livelihood have been brought within their reach, and these have broken the monotony of a do-nothing life. They know now the blessedness and the privilege of work. Through the ability of doing something they are made conscious of their manhood and are ennobled. Living in the dark ages of blindness, the hero of this story knew nothing of the privileges of the blind men in this golden age of Christianity. Blindness to him meant idleness, worthlessness, degradation, tiresome, dull, wearing monotony. All he could do was to beg.

When Christ reached the place where this blind man was, his disciples introduced a conversation about the reason for his blindness. They asked the question, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" According to the belief of their day, they assumed that his blindness was a judgment upon some special

crime. They believed that it was the mark of a signal sin. It is the instinct of conscience to trace suffering to sin. The inhabitants of Melita immediately wrote Paul down as a great sinner, whom justice would not allow to escape, when they saw the venomous viper hanging on his wrist. They believed that God bade the serpent leap from the fire and fasten itself on Paul as the Nemesis of justice. But they were mistaken, just as these disciples were. It has been the tendency of humanity everywhere to dive with cruel surmises into the secrets of other men's lives, and to guess at hidden sins as the explanation of marked suffering. Let the tower of Siloam fall upon a set of men, and they are immediately branded as great sinners. Job's friends attributed his sufferings to signal sins. If the only explanation of signal suffering were signal sin, we would have a most comfortless and miserable time in this world. Life would be full of crushing suspicions. Very few characters would stand. While certain sins do carry with them unmistakable judgments and are retributive, yet this is not the sole philosophy by which the sufferings of men are to be explained. Christ gives another explanation. He gives the explanation which God gave Job from the whirlwind. He says all sufferings are not punitively connected with signal sins, so as to come from these as the direct result. Some sufferings are permitted for the purpose of being transfigured, some sufferings are disciplinary, some sufferings are means of grace, some sufferings are instru-

ments for working out the more glorious purposes of God. They work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness in men, and they exhibit the sustaining grace of God and illustrate the merciful character of God. Some sufferings are designed to set off and exalt God's glorious works. Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned nor his parents: but that the work of God should be made manifest in him."

This answer of Christ gives us a great amount of comfort. It says, "God takes all the responsibility for the deformities which men bring with them into the world." This is precisely the same thing which God himself told Moses when Moses was urging his natural slowness of speech and his weakness as a reason why he should not undertake the great work of leading Israel to freedom. "And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord?" I leave deformities with God, because he claims them as his ordering. I am glad to be able to do this; I am glad to believe that they do not come unforeseen, that they are not contrary to God's plan, but are a part of his plan and will work out a divine purpose. This beggar may have thought that he was living a useless life, but he was not. God had a mission for him as really as he had for any of the twelve apostles, and his mission was a grand one. He was performing his mission when he sat by the roadside to be gazed at. This was God's way of establishing the identity of the man, so that when

Christ gave him sight there might be no room for doubt that a notable miracle had been wrought in him. God meant the man to be one of the most telling witnesses to the Messiahship of Jesus. He meant him also to be an illustration for all time of the value of the practical method of testing the claims of Christ.

2. The history records the miracle which Christ wrought in the man.

He gave him the power of sight. This was what he needed. Christ always adapts himself to the needs of men. To the thirsty woman at Jacob's well he is the "Living Water;" to the mourning sisters at the grave of Lazarus he is "the Resurrection and the Life;" to this poor blind man he is "the Light of the world."

In giving the man sight Jesus made clay out of saliva and dust and anointed the man's eyes, and then sent him to wash in the Fountain of Siloam. No chemicals were used; no surgical operation was resorted to. The means were inadequate to the end, and they were purposely inadequate in order to make it clear that there was a divine power at work.

The work of Christ was complete. The man returned from the Fountain of Siloam seeing. He was a new man; God was a new God; the world was a new world. His soul was filled with new sensations. It would have been a grand privilege to have been with that man on that glorious day of his life. I should have liked to see the effect which the new wonders of the world produced

upon him. With what rapture he must have looked for the first time upon the charm of the human face! How the first burst of cloudland, and the first sight of ocean with its white-crested waves and its ceaseless swell, and the first sweep of the broad landscape, with its mountains and meadows and valleys and gardens and sparkling streams, must have thrilled him. What did he think of the first nightfall, as he perceived the darkness gathering about him? Did he cry out in terror, "Alas! Alas! My blindness is coming back again!" If so, his mistaken despair gave way to new and unexpected delights when he looked up to the starry dome and watched the outflashing of the sparkling stars and saw the moon loom over the horizon in its quiet beauty. Sight! The power of sight! Oh, gracious and beneficent God, we thank thee for it. Such a marvellous gift should bind us to thee with the bonds of ceaseless love and thanksgiving. The thought of this wonderful gift should lead us to consecrate the glorious light to the service of purity and should keep our eyes from viewing vanities. He who sins in broad daylight sins in the midst of the splendor of God's overflowing love.

Let us not forget that the miracle is a parable of redemption. It is a type of our translation from the kingdom of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. If the miracle be such a symbol, we may rightly ask the question, Have we a spiritual joy corresponding to this man's natural joy? Have we a spiritual sight corresponding to his

natural sight? Has a new spiritual world burst in upon our vision? If so, we see grand and beautiful things in this Bible which we never saw before, and which others do not see. If so, we shall be able to see the beauties which are in the Christian's graces and the loveliness which is in the Christian's character. If so, we see Christ in his true light and in all his glorious attributes. If so, we see the grandeur of the truth and the claims which the truth has upon us. If so, heaven and immortality and eternity are great and influential facts in our life.

3. *The investigation and discussion which the miracle called forth.*

The investigation began with the neighbors of the man. To their amazement he came into their midst seeing. His eyes were as perfect as any man's. At first they could not believe it was he, he was so changed. He had a new face. His face was transfigured, for a new soul was beaming in it. Besides this there was a pair of talking eyes in it, and these were never there before. Out of these eyes looked a new life, a manhood, a love, a joy, a faith, a purpose. Out of these eyes looked every grand spiritual thing with which God has endowed humanity. Now put all these things into the man's face, and is it any wonder that the man's neighbors do not know him? Putting the power of sight into the man was like putting a light into an ice-palace or an electric jet into a crystal chandelier.

When the neighbors were convinced that a

notable miracle had been wrought, they took the man to the Sanhedrists. The authorities had denounced Christ, but this miracle conflicted with their denunciation and it must be examined.

The first thing which the rabbins did was to try and prove that no miracle had been wrought, that the man had never been blind. They questioned and cross-questioned the man, but to no purpose; he had plain facts to tell, and he dealt in straightforward truth. Straightforward truth, like pure gold, only shines all the brighter by being put into the furnace. The questioning of others affords a fine opportunity for testimony-bearing.

They found the man more of an opponent than they expected. Christ had wonderfully improved him. He displayed grand simplicity of speech and noble courage of bearing. He refused to be cajoled or brow-beaten or dragooned. He had been blessed by Christ and he stood up for Christ. Such was the depth of his convictions produced by facts that the logic of this school of Jewish Aristotles could not move his convictions. In the battle of logic, although he was but a raw and undrilled recruit, he won the victory and did not leave his opponents a single loophole by which to escape. He hemmed them in by their own absurdities. They advanced theories, he advanced facts. They argued that Jesus could not be from God because he observed not their laws with regard to the Sabbath. He argued that to press the Sabbath question was to admit the miracle, and

that to admit the miracle was to admit that God was in Jesus and working by him; for no man since the world began ever gave sight to one born blind. To hold that God would work thus in a Godlike way by a sinner was to compromise God. God will not contradict himself. The outspokenness of the man is the chime of a great nature.

4. *The history records the fuller instruction and development of the man's faith by Christ.*

Christ did not lose track of the man when he blessed him with sight; he had higher and better blessings for him. He gave him spiritual sight, so that he might relish the joys of salvation and the glories of heaven. He kept himself acquainted with the man's noble course, and when he was cast out of the synagogue, he sought him and revealed himself to him. The man recognized the voice of Christ and looked with joy into the face of his deliverer. He could not forget that voice. He submitted himself to the instruction which Christ gave him. Christ began the development of his faith by putting a question to him: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" This question awakened inquiry in the man. He had heard of "men of God" and of "prophets of God" and of the "Christ of God," but "the Son of God," that was a new term to him; so he asked, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Then Christ told him that He who spoke to him was the Son of God. The man through his reasoning with the Pharisees was ready for this declaration, wonder-

ful as it was, and so he at once responded, "Lord, I believe." So he at once bowed and worshipped Him. This was the highest homage that Christ had yet received from man.

The growth of this man's faith was grand and magnificent. It was a parallel with the growth of the faith of the woman of Samaria. It was a parallel with the growth of the faith of the apostle Thomas, which reached that point of enthusiasm that it cried, "My Lord and my God!" It reached a climax as grand as the climax of Thomas' faith, and it reached it through testing Christ by the practical method. It began at the far-off point where it merely called Christ "a man." It advanced to the point where it was able to speak of him as "a prophet." It took another step and called him "the sinless one." Then it took the last step and called him "the Son of God." When it reached this point it worshipped him as God. There could scarcely be a grander growth in faith than this. Yet it is the growth of faith according to the practical method. The man simply did what Christ told him to do, and found that Christ was all that He claimed to be.

DEDUCTIONS.

1. *Christ's work in the Christian should bear inspection.*

As Christians we should be able to stand searching through and through by our neighbors. There should be a noticeable change in us attracting attention. When Christ wrought his work in

the blind beggar, the man was changed. He ceased to be a beggar. His face was changed, it was literally transformed. He was a new man, and so new was he that men were compelled to come and ask him, "Who changed you?" His reply was, "Jesus did." Christ revealed himself through this man. As it was with him so it should be with us. Christ should find a revelation in and through us. Men should find in us a changed life, changed associations, changed sentiments. They should see in us the out-shining of Christ's power. Now is this the case? What do our neighbors and friends think of us? If they search us will they find Christ in us?

2. Christ submits himself and his religion to be tested in the most practical and matter-of-fact way.

He submits his religion to the test of experience. When a man tries it by experience, it speaks for itself. Nothing could be simpler than this: "Submit your life to my religion, and see if it be not what I claim for it." Do the things of Christ. The blind man of this story did what Christ told him, and he found an assurance of the truth of what Christ told him. In this way he reached faith in Christ. And what a faith his was! There was nothing conditional about it, nothing half-hearted. It was positive and thorough. Such always is the character of faith reached through experience. It is a faith fully rounded and comprehensive.

We need the practical method of testing Christ. We need it because there are some things in the

religion of Christ which can only be known through experience. Take for example one of the sayings of Christ, his magnificent beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." That beatitude is an unknown thing until by experience it is made a reality in our lives. We know the truth of that beatitude only when we reach purity of heart and see God. Brethren, the religion of Jesus Christ is a personal thing; it means personal pardon, personal peace, personal indwelling of Christ. It must therefore be personally tested in order to be known. It matters not how strong a man may be intellectually or how much he may know as a scholar or how many professions he may have mastered, he is no authority on the religion of Jesus Christ until he has honestly subjected his life to Christ and tested Christ's moulding power. He may be an authority upon science, but not an authority upon religion. Until he does this it is presumption and a contradiction of reason and common sense that he should undertake to pronounce upon Christ and his religion.

Christ cannot be seen in an unholy life any more than Westminster can be seen in a London fog. A low life always lowers one's creed. A loose practice begets loose thinking. Men drag Christ down to the level of their living. Great minds are skeptical because their lives are skeptical. Conduct always affects faith. We rejoice in all the confirmation which comes to our faith in Christ from the line of historical evidence, but

after all it is Christ working in us that builds us up in the broadest, firmest, and most sensible faith. It is the men who live the Christian life that know the things of Christ. It is Bunyan's Christian that knows what the land of Beulah is and what are the glories of the Delectable Mountains.

Christ and his religion do not shrink from close scrutiny. They court it. They beg to be tested. They plead with men to put them side by side with other leaders and systems. They challenge the world to produce a higher type of character than that which they produce. They ask for nobler principles than theirs. They ask for grander results. They ask for the production of their equals. Christ and Christianity give themselves to the world to be contrasted. This is a fearless and an honest thing to do, and in itself ought to win respect.

Let us deal faithfully with Christ and Christianity. If we do, heaven with its higher things will some day burst in upon our vision. We will some day see the King in his beauty. Faithfulness to the light which we now have will secure to us the unclouded and perfect light of eternity, and this we shall enjoy with undimmed and perfect eyes. The ceaseless ages will unfold their enrapturing beauties to us, and these will fully equal the brightest pictures painted by our enkindled imagination.

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD."—*John 10:11.*

WE must get rid of our American ideas of shepherding. This is the first requisite to the successful study of this allegory. Christ never likened himself to a Texan herdsman or to a Kansas ranchman. He likened himself to the Oriental shepherd, who loves his flock, and identifies himself with the interest of every sheep. When Jesus talked of the shepherd life, his words were sweetest music to his Judæan hearers. They struck tender chords and awoke tender memories. His hearers felt themselves translated in thought to some mountain-top of Palestine, to Carmel's summit or to one of the peaks of Lebanon, from which they could see the shepherds of the country, amid their clustering flocks, caring for them as a father would care for his children. Some lead their flock up the mountain defile, giving the help of their crook to the feeble among the climbing sheep and carrying a lamb or two in their bosom. Some lead their flocks down to the brooklet for drink. Some cause their flocks to recline under the shadows of the jutting rocks for rest during the heat of the day. Some, in the far-away and wild ravines, stand between their flocks and death while they fight and slay the prowling wolves.

The true shepherd life of Judæa in the time of

Christ was connected with all that was grand and pure. It was connected with the sublimities of a solitude which was broken only by the tinkling bells of the flock and the sweet floating notes of the shepherd's pipe and by the solemn strains of the shepherd's harp. It was connected with the still starry night full of contemplation, or with the brilliant day of crystalline atmosphere which made all the beauties of nature stand forth in the boldest outline. Living in the midst of such surroundings, a good shepherd was looked upon as one of the finest types of a man. He stood for the embodiment of sympathy and pity and tender-heartedness and self-sacrifice and courage. The relation between him and his sheep was such as to develop and manifest these and kindred traits. Certainly this is not an American picture. We must get rid of certain American ideas of shepherding, with its nameless sheep and cracking whips and barking dogs and loveless driving and pushing. The only relation between a rough ranchman and his sheep is a market relation. He thinks of them only as so much wool and so many pounds of mutton. He does not see them as they are before him. His eye is on them after they have passed through the slaughter-house. He sees them as they hang in the market stalls of New York and London and Berlin and Paris. There is no poetry connected with a Western ranch. The poet of the ranch is an unborn creature of the future. A Texan herdsman or a Kansas ranchman is very unlike Jacob on the Syrian

plains feeding Laban's flocks, or David on the plains of Bethlehem protecting the sheep of Jesse his father.

This Scripture is not the first to introduce the shepherd character of Christ. This character is prominent among the prophetic pictures of the coming Messiah. Isaiah portrays it, and so does Zephaniah. It is a word-painting of Christ which the Hebrew poet gives us in his Shepherd Psalm. The poet had reached mature life; he had passed through many trying experiences; he saw before him a checkered future, and he felt that he must say something to his soul to establish it in peace and hope. How shall he express himself? The experience of his shepherd life in boyhood comes back to him and gives him a figure in which to speak of his God: "The Lord is my Shepherd, and I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his own name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." This picture of David's God Christ claims as a picture of himself when he says, "I am the Good Shepherd." It is not without significance that when Christ was born in Bethlehem, where that beautiful Psalm was inspired, his advent into the world was first announced to the shepherds who were watching over their flocks by night. It was the sheep-cotes and the sheep-pasture of Beth-

lehem that were illumined by the shechinal fires which flamed in the sky and illumined the plains. It was to Bethlehem shepherds that the angel faces flashed out on the great dome with greater beauty than a Raphael fresco. It was upon the ears of Bethlehem shepherds that the natal anthem fell, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." Jesus was the great and real Shepherd, of whom all good shepherds were but types, and when he came it was only fitting that he should first of all be exalted and revealed among the faithful shepherds, vigilant even in the night watches, upon the plains of Bethlehem, where David wove his Shepherd Psalm on the loom of his shepherd experience.

What Christ does for his flock establishes his character as a good Shepherd. Therefore what he does is set forth by this Scripture. What does Christ do for the church, his flock? This is the one question around which we are called to centre our thinking as we open up this parable.

I. CHRIST AS A SHEPHERD INDIVIDUALIZES AND DEALS PERSONALLY WITH EVERY MEMBER OF HIS FLOCK.

He tells us that he names them by name. Almost every shepherd in the East names his sheep. To us a flock of sheep look monotonously alike and hopelessly indistinguishable. But this is not the case with an Oriental shepherd. He studies each sheep. He knows its pedigree, its instincts, its disposition, its habits. He treats it as an Arabian

horseman treats his blooded charger. He gives it its separate and distinct name. Sometimes he chooses a name which is characteristic of its individuality and personality. He makes it his task to teach it and familiarize it with its name. He has time for all this during the long days which he and his flock spend alone. By this personal teaching he becomes thoroughly acquainted with each member of his fold, and each member of his fold becomes acquainted with him.

Travellers tell us interesting stories concerning the friendships between shepherds and their sheep. These stories emphasize the words of Christ, "*A stranger* will they not follow, but will flee from him." One traveller relates that once he found on a hillside in Greece three shepherds with flocks of six and seven hundred. Every sheep answered to its name. He experimented with the sheep. He called them by name, but they gave him no attention. When the shepherd called them they came at once. Then he claimed that the sheep knew the shepherd by his dress and not by his voice. The shepherd changed clothes with him. But the traveller in the shepherd's clothes was still treated as a stranger, and the shepherd in the stranger's clothes was recognized as the shepherd.

Let us grasp the great fact which is set in prominence here, viz., God individualizes. He treats us as separate personalities. This is one of the hardest facts to realize. We say that we believe it, but we act as though we did not. Still, no

fact can be more clearly established. The microscope establishes it. It shows that when God deals with the world he deals with the atoms of the world. Under the microscope this vast world of ours is only a system built up of finished and polished atoms. Each crystal in the snowflake is perfect. Each dewdrop is a perfect sphere. God individualizes every gem and constructs it separately. He individualizes the flowers and gives them a separate finish. They are all hand-painted. There is nothing of the machine-chromo about them. To one he gives fire-hues, and to another he gives gentle tints. If God individualizes atoms, crystals in the snowflakes, brilliant stones, flowers, these lower things, he certainly must individualize immortal men, the highest beings in his creation.

We can know the fact from human experience. I know that infidels do not admit this; but what do we care for infidels? We are not seeking either infidel thought or the infidel type of life. Infidels say, "Even suppose this world of ours were lost, it is too small for God to be occupied about. It is a mere fragment of a world among millions of millions. It is contrary to common sense and the dictates of humanity to represent God as busy about so insignificant a sphere." Byron has sung this objection, and Hume has reasoned it out. But Christ, eighteen hundred years before these names were known, pointed out the perfect humanity of such a course upon the part of God. "Which of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose but one, would not leave the ninety-and-nine and go forth

and search for the lost one until he found it? And when he found it what joy he would have! He would call in his neighbors and make a feast." The point of the parable of the Lost Sheep is to show that as man individualizes his possessions, so does God. In the deepest and truest instincts of our nature we find a reflection of the ways of God.

Open the Bible and the same fact is there. The Bible is full of human names. God is represented there as being in personal and covenant relation with his chosen ones. He calls them by their name. Samuel heard his name pronounced by the lips of God, so did Elijah. God changed Jacob's name. God coupled the names of Abraham and Moses with his own holy name in the songs of the church. This was God's address to his covenant people in the days of old: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by thy name." Thus we find it in the Old Testament. It is the same in the New Testament, when God walks among men in Jesus Christ. Christ tells his disciples that they are his chosen friends. He calls them familiarly by name, and they feel the love indicated by this manner. What a response of love and faith and joy there was from that lone weeping woman at the sepulchre when Jesus spoke her simple name, "*Mary!*"

Christ by a wonderful analogy, which only he dare use, sets forth the reciprocal acquaintance and intimacy between him and his people: "I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am

known of mine ; as the Father knoweth me, and as I know the Father."

This great fact carries certain duties.

(a.) *Does Christ recognize our individuality, we should recognize and develop it.*

We live in units, and not in crowds. God has made us distinct, and we should recognize this as he does, and culture that which constitutes the Ego, the self, in us. I believe that we should individualize even our faculties and train them. We should deal separately with will and conscience and affection and reason. God wants us to make the most of ourselves and to be ourselves. He does not want us to be like cast-iron men coming from one mould, or like photographs struck off from the same negative. We can best serve God by working in accordance with our own nature. This has been the way in which all who have reached prominence in the church have worked. The work of the church has been carried on by Paul with his logic and great brain ; by John with his love-force and great heart ; by Peter with his courageous enterprise and dash ; by Apollos with his eloquence which could stir up the graces which Paul had planted ; by Thomas with his slow-working mind, which took nothing for granted, but demanded facts. Thus it was in Bible times. It is the same in our times. The work of the church has been carried on by Guthrie with his power of illustration ; by Duff with his missionary zeal ; by Hamilton with his poetry ; by Chalmers with his metaphysical nature ; by Drummond and MacMil-

lan with their love of nature and the operations of God there ; by Spurgeon with his level-headedness and common-sense.

(b.) *We should reciprocate, and individualize Christ.*

He individualizes us, we should individualize him. We should set him forth as distinct from and above all who would teach us and claim a following from us. We should individualize him among the thinkers of the world and give him the first place. It is our duty to so know Christ that we can tell his voice. What is his voice? It is the gospel. We should so know him and his voice that when a maxim or a command or a principle or a project is set before us for acceptance, we shall be able to say, This is not of Christ ; it has none of his spirit or tone in it ; it is of the world, it is of self ; or, Yes, this is of Christ, and we accept of it.

II. CHRIST AS A SHEPHERD LEADS AND FEEDS HIS FLOCK.

These are the functions of an Oriental shepherd. He leads his flock, and his flock follows. The flocks of the neighborhood are housed for the night in one fold and under a common keeper. In the morning the shepherd comes and calls his own out from the general company. He does this by naming the name of each. As he calls, the sheep respond, and in a flock follow him to the chosen pasture of the day. But he not only leads, he feeds his flock. He maps out the country and makes the best choice. When pasture is scarce,

"for the sake of a single handful of grass he will climb precipices almost perpendicular and stand on ledges of rocks where wild goats will scarcely venture." When the noontide of the day is reached, when the sunbeams pierce like swords and the stones burn the foot which touches them, he gathers the sheep under the shade of the rocks by the well of water where he slakes their thirst.

Christ performs these two functions of the shepherd; he leads and he feeds. Stress must be laid upon the phrase "*He leads.*" It emphasizes his tenderness. He does not drive, *he leads.* It brings out the possibility of walking as a Christian. The Christian's way is open. He is only called to walk in the footsteps of Christ. Christ is a complete example. He began his human life in a cradle that we might have his footsteps to guide us from the cradle to the grave. There are foot-prints for little feet and there are foot-prints for full-grown feet. The requirements of the Christian life are all practicable, for Jesus put them all into life. He asks us to do nothing he has not done. Stress must be laid upon the phrase "*He leads,*" because it brings out the spirit of the true Christian life. Between Christ and the Christian there is a meeting of affinities; there is a oneness of wills. The whole relation of discipleship is that of liberty. It is true that self-surrender is the door into God's fold, but the required self-surrender is voluntary. The Christian surrenders himself to Christ as Christ surrenders himself to the Christian. Christ and self-surrender are synonymous

terms, therefore it is that Christ is called the door to God's fold. Self-surrender is Christ in a practical form. The true Christian has his heart as well as his conscience in his Christian life. He is led, not driven. He follows, he is not forced. He acts from privilege, not from duty ; from choice, not from compulsion.

The accuracy of Christ's leading should not be overlooked.

This is beautifully set forth by a poetic word-painting by the prophet Isaiah. That we may feel the accuracy of the leading of God in the human life, the prophet calls us to look at the accuracy of God's leading in the starry realm. He is in the midst of the heavenly flock of worlds. He is the Shepherd of the stars, and they lie under his sight in the wide fields of space like a flock. The telescope reveals the accuracy of his leading as the Shepherd of the stars. The astronomer's calculations also show it. A friend of mine relates a visit which he made to Harvard College which may serve as an illustration here. The object of his visit was to see the operation of a new astronomical instrument. A star was due at 5:20 P. M., according to the astronomer's calculations. The instrument was directed to the star. When the star crossed the spider-web line of the instrument, it was agreed that the professor, who looked through the instrument, should pronounce the word "Here," and that his assistant, who watched the second-hand of the clock, should let his hammer fall upon the marble table the instant the clock

registered 5:20. Suddenly two sounds broke the impressive silence: the voice of the professor and the tap of the hammer were positively simultaneous. God's guidance of the stars, according to the most advanced science, is perfectly accurate. Stars or souls, it matters not which he guides, his own perfect nature requires that his guidance shall be perfect. Of his own people the Bible says, "He guides them on every side." "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." Not merely his general course of life, but his steps, his life in detail.

But our Shepherd feeds as well as guides. In this also he excels. Comparative theology shows this. All Christ needs is to be put in comparison with shepherd Confucius and shepherd Buddha and shepherd Mohammed and the lesser leaders of modern times. Buddha, for example, according to Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia," gives us beautiful thoughts. Yes, but these are not food. They are golden fruit upon a painted canvas, they are not fruit on living trees. You cannot feed on painted fruit any more than you can warm yourself by a painted fire. Jesus feeds our souls with living thoughts and real facts and holy principles and heavenly views, and not upon mere beautiful fancies. He gives us the same great spiritualities which feed and satisfy God's own nature.

Look at the men whom Christ makes. The flock shows its feeding. Behold John and Peter and Paul and Augustine and Calvin and Knox. Christ broadens and fills up our life in every conceivable and possible way, physically, socially, in-

tellectually, and spiritually. Christ blesses us on every side of our nature. That is what he means when he tells us in this shepherd chapter, "I am come that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly." It always goes well with men when God is allowed to work out his ideas with regard to them. How well it went with Israel when they yielded themselves up to God! Their history was characterized by great men, great deeds, great victories, great institutions, and great progress. He gave them the finest of the wheat. The patriot of Israel saw this; hence his prayer for his nation, which recognized the nation's dependence upon God: "Feed with thy staff, O God, the flock of thine inheritance, that wander, scattered and alone, in the wood: feed them once more on the slopes of Carmel: let them feed, O my God, in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old." Micah 7: 14.

III. CHRIST AS A SHEPHERD PROTECTS AND FOLDS HIS FLOCK.

No part of the shepherd's task was more important in the ancient Orient than this. The flocks were in constant danger. They were exposed to robbers, wolves, mountain torrents, entangling thickets, deceptive precipices, and pitiless storms. What ravages would have been made in Jesse's flock if the shepherd lad David had not bearded the lion and slain the bear! The Orientals tell many stories of bravery to their children, the coming shepherds of the future, that they may

make them brave and true. They tell of one brave boy who stood his ground against a whole band of robbers and slew every one of them. He himself, however, fell exhausted from his wounds. They found him dead in the midst of his flock, literally cut in pieces. The romance of the story comes in at the close. The sheep mourned for him as if they were human. They refused to be folded anywhere except at the spot where he fell. There a fold was built at the dictation of the saved flock, and there it stood for centuries as the monument to the brave shepherd-boy. That story may be fancy, or it may be fact colored beyond recognition; but the story of Christ's sacrifice for us is no fancy. He died on Calvary, and it is not possible for language to over-color what he suffered for us, or to over-state the benefits which accrue to us from his sacrificial death.

His atonement is our protection from the law which would smite us with a death-blow. Let me illustrate by a familiar story, first told by an English clergyman. An Englishman came to America and became a naturalized citizen. He afterward removed to Spain. For some cause he was apprehended by the Spanish courts and condemned to death. The English and American consuls interceded for him, but in vain. The day of execution came and he was blindfolded and set up to be shot. A line of soldiery levelled their muskets at him, but as they did so, the American consul, with the stars and stripes in his hand, leaped out before the guns and ran to him and

wrapped him in the American flag. He then turned and defied the rifles of Spain. Folded in this flag he was safe. That flag put the American nation between him and death. There is a better flag than the American flag. It is the blood-red flag of the atonement. This is the flag which Christ wraps around us, and at it the muskets of God's law dare not fire a single shot. All this Christ tells us in this shepherd-chapter when he says that he lays down his life for his sheep.

Part of the protection of any flock is its proper folding. Christ as the Shepherd of souls folds his followers in the church. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred men are safer in the church than they are out of it. Our security is in Christian fellowship *versus* isolation. The mutual duties which the Bible enjoins upon us require church fellowship for performance. We need the ordinances of the church and the duties of the church and the responsibilities which the church lays upon us and even the discipline of the church. These are our protections against the world and its evils.

There is an eternal folding of Christians by the Lord. The celestial city, with its jasper walls and pearly gates and many mansions, is converted into an eternal fold. In that city Jesus will feed his flock gathered from the nations and will lead them unto living fountains of water.

The shepherd-character of Christ ought to give us confidence in him in the trying scenes of life. These are explainable. They are parts of his wise

leading. The coffin is sent into the home for the loved child. Are the Shepherd's love and will in that? Yes. He takes the lambs in his arms and carries them to the heavenly fold, that the parent's heart may follow and live in heaven. The trials of life are preventive of evil. In Scotland, when the snowstorm sweeps the hill, the shepherd leads his flock out into the cutting winds and up to the storm-side of the hill. Why does he expose them thus? Does he mean that they shall perish? No. He adopts this plan to keep them from perishing. If he allowed them to remain in the shelter of the valley they would be buried in the drift. Whenever Christ takes us to the storm-side of the hill he means to rescue us from burial in the drift of evil.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF
LAZARUS.

"JESUS SAID UNTO HER, I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE."

—*John* 11:25.

THE Christian world has never grown weary in praising this chapter of John's Gospel. It has been said that for thrilling interest and significant import it stands without a rival in evangelical history. This is true. It is a chapter that quivers with life and interest and pathos. It has been said that every sentence in the chapter has the touch of nature. This also is true. Art has no part in this narrative. Not a touch of her pencil can be traced. Her skilful hand could add nothing to that which in itself is inimitably sublime. The story is its own witness. It proves its own historic certitude. Truth and authenticity shine out in it from beginning to end. The story is not made, it is simply told. It is not fiction, it is fact. The mind of man could not weave a story like this, it was woven by events. It is too natural and too consistent with itself to be a fabrication. Mary is too much like Mary as we have seen her elsewhere, and Martha is too much like Martha. Then besides this, the character of Christ in the narrative is only such as God himself could conceive. It stands in majestic solitude in the literature of the world. In all the conceptions of all

the nations in all the ages, which relate to man's idea of God, there is nothing like this, this picture of God in Christ. In the narrative we see our God crushing for man the terror of his existence, grim Death; and in it we see our God giving man the greatest conceivable blessings, victory over the grave and eternal life beyond the grave, to be filled up with eternal progress and with eternal communion with God.

The far-famed Spinoza, the great pantheistic philosopher, said to his friends, "If I could accept of the resurrection of Lazarus, I would dash to pieces my entire system and embrace without reluctance the faith of the Christians." We do not wonder at such an estimation of this miracle by a thinker of Spinoza's power. But Spinoza, who brought his great mind to the study of the miracle, gave us no good reason for the rejection of it, and so we conclude that there is no good reason for its rejection. If there had been a valid objection within the reach of man, an objection which could stand the searching of honest criticism, Spinoza would have reached it, and would have made the Christian world confront it. But he did not. Therefore we hold to the fact, so full of revelation and revolution, so full of destruction to skepticism and edification to faith, that Jesus Christ has a power which can empty the sepulchre and thrill the dead.

The miracle is the climax of Christ's ministry. It is the climax of the long series of miracles which John records to establish the truth that

Jesus is the Christ. It is the climax of the resurrections wrought by Christ. It is greater than the resurrection of Jairus' daughter or the resurrection of the widow's son at the gate of Nain. Death had a longer grip on Lazarus. Death had frozen his frame into icy coldness and given it a marble stiffness. Lazarus was deeper in the depths of mortality. Corruption and the worm had begun their ravages. Besides this there was a higher manifestation of power upon the part of Christ in working this miracle. . He took the daughter of Jairus by the hand, he touched the bier whereon the dead son of the widow lay; in the resurrection of Lazarus he simply spake the word of life. He manifested that all that is requisite for raising the dead is his mere volition. Volitions dart from him as sunbeams dart from the sun, and they carry in them life and divine power.

The miracle gives us the climax of the revelations of Jesus Christ. All of the miracles and addresses recorded in this Gospel are intended to set forth some characteristic or function of Christ. This miracle gives us the grandest exhibit of all. It gives us the fullest evidence of Christ's divinity, and at the same time the fullest evidence of Christ's humanity. He raises the dead—that is divinity; he weeps—that is intense humanity. It sets forth the grandest work which he does for man: he delivers him from the power of death and inducts him into a glorious immortality. A glorious immortality! Nothing is beyond this in

the experience of man. It is impossible even to conceive anything higher.

As this miracle gives us the highest, the climactic revelation of Jesus Christ, we may conclude that Christ is near the great end of his tragic career. He is. Why should he remain longer on earth when he has made his complete revelation? Because his work of revelation was about finished, God allowed the raising of Lazarus to call out the utmost wrath of his foes. This wonderful deed made them feel that a crisis had been reached. Either they must overturn Christ or Christ will overturn them. They at once determined that he should die, and from that moment they gave themselves no rest until they saw him nailed as a malefactor to the cross upon Calvary. There are only three months from this point in the history of Jesus unto the cry, "It is finished!"

But we must not lose sight of the central point of this whole history. The conversation of Christ sets it forth. It is the great fact to which we have already referred, and which Christ emphasizes for the comfort of these mourners, and for bereaved Christians unto the end of time. It is this: To all who believe in Christ he is the resurrection and the life. If faith had been able to grasp this fact without this miracle, this miracle would never have been wrought. Christ raised the dead Lazarus, and turned back the corruption which had begun its work on his entombed body, in order to make this fact palpable and place it

within the vision of man. Everything else recorded here is secondary to the exhibition of this glorious fact. Everything else is only intended to be as drapery adorning it and giving it vividness.

THE HISTORICAL FACTS IN THE SCRIPTURE.

1. *There was a Christ-loved and a Christ-loving family sorely bereaved.*

The story of this family is put upon record to beget like families. It shows us the possibilities of our homes. They may become the abiding-places of Jesus, and in this way they may become distinguished. Jesus made this home of Bethany his abiding-place, and this distinguished it and gave it mention in his immortal history. Of what other home in Bethany do we know anything? Christ distinguishes all who are connected with him, and gives every home a reputation which opens its door to him. We should consider that every home has its character. It is the abode of something. If it will not admit religion and entertain it, then fashion and irreligion and pleasure and carnality will make their abode in it, and will mould and determine its reputation and destiny. We do not realize as we ought the personality of our families and the duties we owe that personality. There are family duties, and these are as binding as personal duties. There are the family name and the family altar and the family pew, and all these must be treated in such a way as to honor Christ and recommend his religion. Each mem-

ber of the family should be individually faithful to these.

But it is asked, "What is the gain of religion? Religion will not protect the home from sickness and death. Here is a family loving Christ and loved by Christ, and yet it is smitten with sickness and visited by death." Yes, that is true. The stay of the house is stricken down. Disease runs its course. Jesus is sent for, but the messenger scarcely reaches him before Lazarus dies. The death-hush reigns in the home. There is a funeral and there is a burial. All this happens to every home, whether it be religious or irreligious. All this is admitted, and still we claim that religion is a blessed thing for the family.

It gives privileges and comforts in the scenes of death of which an irreligious family know nothing. It gives peaceful resignation and trust where otherwise there would be heart-rebellion and despair. It enables the family to feel that they are in the hand of infinite love, and not in the crushing iron grip of unfeeling fate. It gives them access to the supporting sympathy of God, who is over all. A funeral without the sympathy of God is the blackest of all black things and the horror of all horrors. You can see the privilege of religion in the home in the hour of sorrow as you read this page. It is this: These sisters can put their case before Christ. They can send him a message, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick." They can make Christ a companion of their trial, and leave the case in his strong hands and with

his unerring wisdom. This is the privilege of a Christ-loved and a Christ-loving family. When one of its members is stricken down in sickness, the other members can kneel in prayer and say, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick," and leave the case with the love of God. There is a world of comfort in being able to speak of our friends as God's loved ones, and in being able to appeal to his love on their behalf.

2. The purpose of this trial is explained.

Such a trial demands explanation. We must know the philosophy of it. This Christ recognizes. Hence he gives the philosophy of it. He says the trial is intended for the glory of God. When the messenger from Bethany reached him and told him of the sickness of Lazarus, he said, "This sickness will not bring Lazarus into the unbroken grasp of death; it is intended to advance the glory of God and to glorify me by establishing my divine Sonship." It gave Christ an opportunity of making a public appeal to the Father to bear him testimony, and it gave him an opportunity of exercising his divine power in raising Lazarus from the tomb. It is a great comfort to the child of God, when under the hard discipline of trial, to know that it has for its object the glory of God. Can infidelity give us a philosophy as comforting? Can it teach us how to read the providences? Does it declare that the interplay of influence and of events has as an outcome the glory of God? Yet such is the fact. Since as the people of God we seek above all things the glory of God, it satis-

fies us to know that the ultimatum of all happenings is God's glory. Why is this? Because we are assured that the glory of God is connected with the good of his people. Whatever exalts him exalts us. We are glorified with God. For example, God is glorified through the upbuilding of the church and through its purification: but what does the upbuilding and purification of the church mean to the church? It means that it shall be before God perfect in beauty, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

It may be impossible for us to see how our buffetings and pains and griefs and resolutions and persecutions may be made to exhibit the glory of God; we may not be able to understand the process, but the process goes on and we see the result. This is enough. The world has been full of just such things, and yet the glory of God has been maintained and has been uppermost in human history. It was so in the perplexing experience of this home of Bethany. Our understanding of a process is not necessary to its operation or to the production of glorious results. It is a strange thing to see a beautiful flower rise out of the mire-heap. We do not understand why it should and how it can; but it does. It seems impossible that the white water-lily should draw its purity and beauty from the rubbish in the bottom of the lake; but notwithstanding the apparent impossibility, water-lilies float on the surface of thousands of lakes like little fleets of ivory and pearl. The fact that God's glory is the controlling purpose of

every adverse providence ought to bring patience, hope, and courage into our lives.

3. *The needed comfort in bereavement is given.*

Jesus comes to the bereaved home. He does not come at once; he delays two days, until he finishes his work in Peræa. By this he shows that the calls of friendship should be held subordinate to public duty. Does this delay look as though his love for the home at Bethany had met with a chill? To prevent such a surmise, and to teach that delay upon the part of God does not indicate a lack of love, the pen which records the delay of Jesus immediately adds, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." Delay has its mission. It disciplines the love of this home. It puts it to a test which develops it. It gives time for the death of Lazarus to become widely known. It gives death greater power over the entombed man, and thus makes the miracle of raising him the more wonderful and the more declarative of Christ's divine power. The product of this delay makes it clear that in God's dealings with his own people there are no cold, heartless arrangements. All his arrangements are love arrangements.

When Jesus reached Bethany he was met in a way which brought out the individuality of the members of the home. Martha, the practical woman, the executive head of the family, the older sister in whom was vested the authority, was the first to hear of his coming and the first to meet him. The messenger who brought the word of course went to her. Mary, like her true self, was

alone. She had given herself up to contemplation. She had to be sought and told that the Master had come and had called for her.

But we are especially interested in the words of comfort which Christ addressed to these mourners. They are words for all time, and are instructive as to how we should deal with mourners. He does not say much, but what he does say is sufficient. Do we realize just how little he did say? These were his words: "Thy brother shall rise again; I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" That was all that Jesus said. Now that we have the words of Jesus we ask the question, What did he do to comfort these mourners? He set before them the privilege of being in true and living relation with him. He set before them the way in which a Christian united to him by faith should think of death. The true view of death is victory over death. This chapter is precious for this very thing: it teaches Christians how to think of death. It calls death "night;" now we associate night with the sunburst of the morning. It calls death "sleep;" we associate sleep with an awakening to fresh life and strength. Christ has conquered death for us, so that death is ours now. It is put among the Christian's possessions. It is written, "All things are yours," and death is enumerated among the all things. According to the twenty-third Psalm, we do not meet death itself; we only meet with the shadow of

death. Death is changed into a sleep, and only a part of us sleeps, the body. The eternal life, which is the true life, which we receive by faith in Christ and which is within us, never changes. The covenant between us and Christ never breaks. Death hath no power over it. When are these things a reality to the believer? Martha said, "Away on in the last day." Jesus said, "Now. Death is nothing to cause despair upon the part of those who are mine and who have the blessings which I give them. Their soul continues in living communion with me and their body sleeps in my hand; I can awaken it at any moment." To make his declaration plain to faith, and to prove its truth, he awakened Lazarus.

The after-writers of the Word take their keynote from these words of Christ. Not a gloomy thing is said about the death of a Christian, nor is one gloomy thought encouraged. I want to emphasize this. On the contrary, the brightest and most glorious things are spoken in relation to it. It is said to be a "going to Christ," which is better than anything here on earth. It is called "sleep in Jesus." It is called "blessedness:" "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." It is put among the Christian's possessions. It is coupled with a song which celebrates the believer's present victory: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Christian Church needs a great growth in faith upon this subject. It needs enlightenment con-

cerning death as an event in the experience of the friends of Christ.

4. *The establishment of the Christian's ground of comfort by a wondrous miracle.*

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life," and he proved it by giving resurrection and life to Lazarus. For the cultivation of the faith of his people, he embodied his saying in an actual event. He proved that Lazarus, whom he called his friend, still lived by bringing back his soul from the world in which it was living and by awakening his body out of sleep.

I am not going to try and picture the scene of this resurrection. We require no further picture than that given us here, which sets two things into prominence, viz., The weeping of Jesus, and his life-giving call which he sent into the tomb.

It may be asked, Why did Jesus weep? Did he weep because of the death of Lazarus, his friend? It is not asserted in this chapter that he did. With his exposition of the death of his friend before us, there is no ground for such a supposition. It is said distinctly here that he wept because of what he saw. "When therefore Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept." What he saw caused his weeping. He saw mourners broken down with weeping and with paroxysms of weeping, and his sympathies were moved and he wept through sympathy. But is this the whole explana-

tion of his tears? I think not. It does not cover the words, "He groaned in spirit and was troubled." These words are translated by the highest authorities, "He was moved with indignation in the spirit." Loyalty to the Greek will admit of no other translation. He saw something more than sorrow; he saw that the pungency of the sorrow of these mourners came from defective views of death as related to his followers. It came from this unbelief with respect to him. Even Martha, to whom he had just expounded the true view of the death of those who believe in him, did not accept and rest in him as he had announced himself, viz., as "the resurrection and the life." She tried to keep the grave from being opened when he sought to prove the truth of what he said. If there was one place on this earth where Jesus ought to have been fully understood and appreciated, it was in the home of Bethany. When he saw these bitter tears, he saw in them the evidence that he was misunderstood even in the home where he was best understood. When he saw this, he wept through pity and disappointment as well as through sympathy. In this weeping there were some of the elements which were in his tears over Jerusalem. Unbelief had something to do with these tears. Christ is grieved when we give way to and are swayed by wrong ideas of death in its relation to his people. Wrong ideas in this matter dishonor him who is the resurrection and the life and who gives his people deliverance from death.

After the weeping had passed, Jesus required

the stone to be rolled away from the door of the cave-sepulchre. When this was done, for the sake of those present who denied his commission from heaven, he looked up to heaven and identified himself with the Father and made the resurrection of the dead man a test of his claim for identity. Then he threw his voice into the tomb and with great power gave the command, "Lazarus, come forth!" The voice prevailed. The dead heard it, and to the amazement of all Lazarus stepped forth alive and in his grave-clothes. Nothing is told us of the joyous rapture of that home which received back its dead, but there was rapture there. We know there was rapture there, because there is rapture in our hearts to-day as we read this testimony of God to his Son and this proof of our deliverance from death through faith in Jesus Christ.

A CLOSING POINT.

The history of the miracle reveals that a glorious immortality is connected with and founded upon friendship with God.

Lazarus was a friend of Jesus. It was to the home of friendship that Jesus went. It was a friend whom he raised. It is a significant fact that the changes are rung upon the friendship between Jesus and the family of Bethany. After Lazarus had died, Jesus called him "friend."

What is the strongest argument in favor of our immortality? It is this: God's friendship for us. It is not the symbolism of nature, as some claim.

It is not the yellow wheat-stalk, with its rich and bending head of sixty-fold, which rises from the grave of the one grain. It is not the flower springing from the grave of the black seed and putting on its golden garments. It is not the butterfly rising from its worm-life and sporting in its beauty in the crystal dome of light. These symbolisms of nature get all their significance from the establishment of man's resurrection and immortality. All the thoughts which they suggest are after-thoughts and not fore-thoughts. Let resurrection and immortality be believed and then they are full of meaning and comfort, but not until then. No, the strongest argument for our immortality is our friendship with God; or, if you will, God's friendship for us. God carries the immortality of man in his own nature. It is thus that we reason. God's friendships must be like God. They must accord with his nature and satisfy his nature. God is eternal; the friendships which he forms, therefore, in order to accord with his nature and satisfy his nature, must be as eternal. Now there can be no eternal friendship except the parties forming it be eternal. If as parties in God's friendships we are to be eternal, we must be immortal. A glorious immortality is based upon divine friendship. It is he who believes in Christ who has a glorious immortality. The promise is to faith, and to faith only. Have we faith? That is the determining question. That is the vital problem with us all. Let us settle it at once.

CHRIST AND THE SEEKING GREEKS.

"AND THERE WERE CERTAIN GREEKS AMONG THEM THAT CAME UP TO WORSHIP AT THE FEAST; THE SAME CAME THEREFORE TO PHILIP, WHICH WAS OF BETHSAIDA OF GALILEE, AND DESIRED HIM, SAYING, SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS."—*John 12:20, 21.*

WE wish to magnify the event recorded by this Scripture. We wish to place the coming of these Greeks among the notable things in the story of Christ. See how it stirred him! Mark the wonderful words it called forth! Behold the marvellous and startling phenomenon which attended it, and listen to the voice of God which spake through the great vault of heaven in tones of thunder! The evangelist John knew the value and importance of this event, with its accompanying wonder, so he wheeled it into line with the arguments and proofs of the deity of Christ. His Gospel was written to establish the deity of Christ, and he could not leave out such a Scripture as this. This Scripture is crowded with testimony such as John wishes. In it the Gentile Greeks, far famed for their culture and their research, bear testimony to Christ. In it Christ's own nobility of spirit bears testimony to himself. In it Christ utters a prediction concerning his death and its effects, the fulfilment of which was designed to be an evidence of his divinity. In it is the testimony of the Father, who spake from the throne of heaven and owned his Son.

It seems to me that we should classify the coming of the Greeks and its sequences with such incidents as the flashing of the Shechinah light at midnight on the plains of Bethlehem, and the singing of the natal song by the angel choir, and the wonder at Christ's baptism, and the glory scene on the Mount of Transfiguration. What could be more wonderful than Jesus talking up into the sky to God upon his throne, and immediately receiving an answer back from God in an audible voice? At the beginning of his public career God in an audible voice introduced Jesus as his Son, and commanded men to hear him and bow to his authority; now at the close of his public career, for there were only two days between him and Calvary, the same God speaks from heaven and puts the stamp of divine approval upon all that Jesus has done and said. He says that the career of Christ has been such as to glorify Him. At the beginning of Christ's life Magi from the East came to him and paid him homage; now at the close of his life, on the very eve of his great agony, Greeks from the West come to pay him homage. East and west his life strikes out full of beneficent purposes. The presence of these Greeks moved the soul of Jesus. They were an earnest of the glorious incoming of the Gentile world into his kingdom and a prophecy of the mighty results of his death. These Greeks, sent by the Heavenly Father, by their coming cheered him on to the cross. They made the way to the cross easier. His own words, called out by their

coming, show this. In his address to them he deals with Calvary and the outcome of Calvary. Their coming pleased him, for he granted their request and revealed himself unto them.

Who these Greeks were we are not told. Doubtless they were proselytes to the Jewish religion and were advanced thinkers. To them Jehovah was a truer ideal of God than were all the gods known to the Greek mind. He satisfied them. Their souls could feed upon him. We judge these Greeks by the way in which Christ treated them and by the estimate which he put upon them. They stand before the Christian world as magnificent types of honest inquirers after truth and as men loyal to their privileges. Their experience magnifies this fact, viz., All who honestly seek Christ find him, and Christ rewards them with the fullest revelations of himself.

The design of this Scripture is to tell us what these Greeks saw in Christ, and thus to teach us what we should see in him. Let us come to this Scripture with the cry, "We would see Jesus." If we send this cry to the Holy Spirit, he will take the things of Christ herein set forth and will show them to us.

WHAT THE INQUIRING GREEKS SAW. SEEING CHRIST
CONSISTS IN SEEING WHAT THEY SAW.

1. *The seeking Greeks saw the divine object of Christ's mission, which was the controlling purpose of his life.*

We never see one truly and thoroughly until

we see his aim and object in life. We must look upon his controlling purpose. These Greeks wanted to see Christ, so the first thing that Christ showed them was his controlling purpose of life, the grand object of his mission. He let them into the inner circle of his being. He let them see the action of his soul. His whole being was bound up in one purpose, viz., the advancement of the glory of God, and this was what the Greeks saw.

The controlling purpose of Christ was set forth in connection with a great wonder. God publicly owned him and accepted of his work. This God did in answer to the cry which Jesus sent to heaven, that the Father would glorify his own name. Jesus sought the Father's glory, and by so doing he reached glory himself. Thus it always is; the men who seek God's glory assuredly attain their own glory. God answered Christ from his throne, and men heard the voice of God. That answer was enough to manifest the relation between Christ and the Father, and to show that Christ was doing a premeditated and divinely arranged work. That answer was enough to teach that the glory of God stands in the forefront of all the purposes and providences of the universe, and that it is first with God and ought to be first with all others.

If the men of Christ's day could have entered into the reality of this wonder, if they could have rightly heard God's voice sounding through the skies in attestation of Jesus Christ, they would have had no difficulty in knowing who he was or

in recognizing the glory of his mission. But the men of Christ's day did neither apprehend nor comprehend the wonder. To some God's voice was only thunder in a cloudless sky. To others it was only the voice of an angel. This was the highest view taken of it, but it was infinitely below the glorious fact. By these low views of God's great wonder men lost the true conception of the Son of God and of his great saving work. Are we not like these men who said, "It thunders!" "It is the voice of an angel!" instead of saying, "The Father owns his Son"? Are we not for ever lowering the things of God, and thus dooming ourselves to half knowledge and half faith and half love? We limit ourselves when we limit the things of God, when we see less in Christ Jesus than is in Christ Jesus, when we see less in the Bible than is in the Bible, when we see less in the arguments establishing Christianity than is in these arguments. Our spiritual growth and our confirmation in the faith of Jesus require us to magnify and not to minimize the things of God. Let us not rationalize and explain away the miracles of God. Let us not modify or contract the grand fact of the deity of Christ. Let us not dwarf the glorious promises of the Covenant, but let us give every word its full meaning. Let us not slur a single attribute of Jesus Christ, but let us set forth every attribute in marked and honest prominence. This will give us a clear and correct vision of Christ and make us magnificent Christian men and women. The men who confound

the uncreated God with a created angel never truly knew God. Their conceptions of God and Christ are away below what God and Christ are.

That we may see the place which the glory of God had in the life and purpose of Jesus Christ, let us examine the words which God spoke to him from the throne. When Christ declared that he could bear anything and meet anything if only God were glorified, when he cried to heaven, "Father, glorify thy name," God's words to him were, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." These words of the Father are both retrospective and prospective. They declare that up to this point Christ had glorified God; they declare that from this point on Christ will glorify the Father.

Do we not see how the past life of Jesus glorified God? God glorified his name, through Christ, by sending Christ into the world. The gift of his Son exhibited the grandeur of his love. It opened to the world his magnificent purposes and his great thoughts. God was glorified in the sinless and perfect life which Jesus lived. The golden words which fell with thrilling power from the lips of Jesus, and which set forth God's thoughts before men, glorified the Father. So did his wonderful deeds of power and love. His life was designed to be a revelation of God, and it was. It is the fullest and clearest and most perfect revelation of God which the world has. What grand conceptions of God does it give us! When we

want to see the Father we look at him through the life of the Son.

If there be one fact more clearly taught than another in the Bible, it is this: The glory of God is seen in Christ. Let me choose one point by way of illustration. Christ glorified God in his life by vindicating his character in the presence of the existence of sin. Dark words were spoken against the character of God because of the existence of sin in the human race. Insinuating questions were asked, questions such as these: Why did not God create man with the power of resisting sin? Why did he place him where he would be conquered by evil? Where is the infallibility and power and wisdom and love of God, in view of the fall of man? These questions were calculated to leave a blot on the character of the Creator. Christ vindicated God. He came into the world and lived in the very same nature which fell in Eden. In that nature he met sin and temptation. He met these in their worst forms and in their highest degrees. Adam's trial in Paradise was mere play in comparison with the trial of Jesus in the wilderness. But in that nature which fell in Eden he triumphed in the wilderness. He thus demonstrated what Adam might have done. He vindicated God by showing that sin was no necessity of our nature and no necessity of our circumstances. His conflict with Satan and with temptation and with sin was the conflict of a man, and it revealed what man might have done in the beginning. Man and not God is

chargeable with the existence of sin and woe in this world of ours which came from the hand of God perfect. Thus we see how the name of the Father was glorified in the life of Jesus up to the point when the divine voice from heaven bore witness to him in the presence of the inquiring Greeks and before the assembled multitudes.

Do we not see how the Father is glorified in Christ from this point on to the close of Christ's earthly history? His sacrifice on the cross opens the gates of heaven to sinners. Is not this to the glory of God? What is more to the glory of God? Does not the cross glorify the law of God and exhibit its unchanging and impartial justice? When the law deals with the Son of God not one of its demands is abated. Justice is a glorious attribute, and it is an essential to the welfare of the universe. Men make an attack upon God because he consigns impenitent sinners to eternal punishment. Does not the cross vindicate God in this? Could God do more to save men than to give his Son to death? The impenitent trample the blood of the Son of God under foot and account it an unholy thing. The impenitent walk over the cross to their doom; if they will persist in doing this, how can God save them from their doom? Let the human mind which criticises the goodness of God suggest a better goodness. The cross exhibits infinite love upon the part of God, and there is nothing beyond infinite love.

2. *The seeking Greeks saw the only method by which Christ could accomplish his object.*

What was this only method? It was by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross. The cross did not enter into the popular ideal of the Messiah in the days when Christ walked the earth. Going to the cross was considered fatal. The idea of victory through the cross had no existence. The Jews thought that they were dooming Christ to eternal infamy and ignominy when they delivered him to the Romans to be crucified. The ideal of the Messiah extant was that of a great personage coming in magnificence and power, setting up a carnal kingdom, commanding legions, inaugurating devastating wars, and playing the part of an Alexander, only surpassing Alexander in his moral character and in the greatness of his victories. If these Greeks who sought to see Jesus had the popular ideal, Christ corrected it and set before them the true ideal. He introduced himself to them as the crucified One. He told them that the cross was the battleground upon which he was to win his victories and become great in the world. He taught them also that the cross was the battleground upon which his followers were to win their victories and rise to their greatness. Without the cross Christ is weakness, but with the cross Christ is power. What is true of Christ is true of his disciples. If you are making no sacrifice in life, you are without power. Self-forgetful love is moral strength. This and this only is moral strength. Twice in these brief words does Christ set before these Greeks, and all who listened to him, the fact that he must be crucified,

and that only by dying could he accomplish his mission. He declares it by the simile of the corn of wheat. He declares it by saying that the Son of man should be lifted up. "The Son of man" was a well understood title of the Messiah, and the term "lifted up" was understood as a term equivalent to crucifixion. We rejoice in this description which Christ gave of the manner of his coming death. It was a death wholly improbable to any Jew. But the fact that this improbable death was pictured out before it came stands as the evidence that it was arranged of God and had a divine purpose.

Not only were the inquiring Greeks allowed to see the coming sacrifice of Christ, they were allowed to see how much of Christ's love was in the sacrifice and how much the sacrifice cost Christ. They were permitted to witness the *soul-storm* in Christ. They were allowed to see the foreshadow of Gethsemane. We can trace the mental process which brought on the soul-storm within Christ. The current of this thought was natural. The coming of these Greeks with their burning desire stirred Christ to thought and lifted before him the prophetic day when he would be a Light to lighten the Gentiles. The thought of this day suggested the means by which it was to be inaugurated, viz., his death. The thought of his death lifted before him the awful vision of Calvary, with its horrid contact with sin and its divine desertion. As he looked the awful realities in the face, his human nature shrank back and hesitated and questioned

for a moment whether it should recede or go forward. As yet there were no wounds inflicted upon his body; as yet no hand of violence had fallen upon him; as yet the heavens had not become dark; but to his mind the coming things were real, and he suffered them mentally. A flash of lightning lit up the future and made everything awfully vivid and threw him into an agony of soul. In this conflict he spake aloud, and the Greeks heard him and thus learned of the conflict. The sharp inner conflict lasted only for a moment. The moment the conflict was inaugurated it was won. The conflict and the triumph are recorded here in a single verse.

The question has been asked, How can we best understand this inner conflict as recorded here? There is a simple way of understanding it, and that is by properly punctuating the record. The best critics consider that the proper punctuation is to use two interrogation points. That would make the record read in this wise: "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? No. Because for this hour came I into the world. I will say, Father, glorify thy name." This reading gives the conflict vividness, and shows how long it lasted and how Christ won it. He questioned himself into victory.

Is it asked, Why is this conflict recorded? It is recorded for the same reason that the Gethsemane scene is recorded. Would you be willing to spare the record of Gethsemane from the gospel page?

It helps you to a right conception of the awfulness of sin. It helps you to measure the greatness of the sacrifice of the cross. It magnifies Christ, his heroism and his loyal love. We would lose much if we lost the vision of Christ in Gethsemane. As Gethsemane was Calvary before its time, so this inner conflict was Gethsemane before its time.

3. *The seeking Greeks saw the wide and glorious results which were to accrue to Christ from following the only method open to him.*

Christ told them of the power of his cross. As Jesus addressed them the future opened to his soul, and he saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied. As he looked into the future he saw a twofold victory for the cross.

(a.) *He saw a victory over Satan.* Speaking in the prophetic present, he says, "Now is the crisis of the world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." In the cross we have an exposure of Satan. He necessitated the cross. By the cross he struck at the life of the Son of God. At the cross he showed his malignity. Satan utters smooth and deceptive words concerning sin; the cross makes the lie in his words clear, for it shows just what sin is. By setting forth the truth, the cross unmasks the errors of Satan, and robs him of his influence, and dethrones him and ejects him.

(b.) *He saw a victory over the hearts of men.* Speaking in the prophetic present he says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." As Jesus glanced through time he saw glorious victories for the cross over human

hearts, and of these he spake to the inquiring Greeks. We are not kept in ignorance of the glorious future. Was there a soul-storm in the hour of Christ's experience? There was also a soul-thrill in it. This thrill he communicates to us. The future has in it multitudes of Christians which no man can number. Thousands, multiplied by tens of thousands, will submit to Christ in loyal subjection. Nations shall be born into his kingdom in a day. "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Perhaps these Greeks, who had been won to Jehovah, were familiar with the Old Testament prophecies which set forth the extent of the Messiah's work among the Gentiles, and they came to assure themselves that Jesus was the one who would realize these prophecies. If so, Christ in speaking to them of the power of the cross met the very ideas in their soul. He set himself forth as the promised Light of the Gentiles. He drew a picture of the glorious extent of the kingdom.

How is the kingdom of Christ to be set up and enlarged? Does Christ tell us? Yes. He tells us that it is by the power of his sacrifice.

Sacrifice has always a power to draw and to win. The construction of our mind makes it so. The missionary who goes to foreign lands, at a great sacrifice, carries our heart and our prayer and our contributions with him. It is the man who sacrifices himself that multiplies himself. This seems to be the law for all realms. Christ points out its operation in nature. It operates in

the experience of a corn of wheat which multiplies. A grain of wheat is never glorified until it sacrifices itself. Try to preserve it in the granary and it makes no increase. It is when it dies in the soil that the green blade springs up, grows into a firm golden stalk with golden tassel and with half a hundred golden sheaths filled with golden grain. As the great sacrifice for sin, Christ sets himself before these inquiring Greeks as God's seed-corn which would bring forth the million-sheaved harvest on the myriad hills of earth.

What did the inquiring Greeks see when they saw Christ? They saw Christ in his relation to heaven; they saw him as the heaven-owned and the heaven-honored; they saw his grand sacrificial love; they saw his death on the cross in both the God-ward and man-ward bearing. He died for the glory of God, and he died for our sakes. They saw what it cost Christ to die, and the grand and crowning results of his dying.

JESUS TEACHING HUMILITY BY WASH-
ING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET.

"YE CALL ME MASTER AND LORD ; AND YE SAY WELL, FOR SO I AM.
IF I THEN, YOUR LORD AND MASTER, HAVE WASHED YOUR
FEET, YE ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET."—
John 13:13, 14.

THIS chapter introduces the closing section of the Gospel according to John. All that precedes in this Gospel deals with Christ's wonderful life ; these closing chapters deal with scenes which pertain to his death.

His public life is over. He will deliver no more sermons in the Temple, he will utter no more warnings, he will work no more miracles. He has wrought enough and spoken enough to lead the world to faith in him. If men will continue in wilful unbelief they must bear the consequences. The remaining hours of his life Christ gives to private fellowship with his own disciples. When this fellowship is over he goes out to Gethsemane and Calvary.

In this Scripture we find Christ and his disciples in an upper chamber of Jerusalem entering upon the celebration of the last Passover and upon the first celebration of the Lord's Supper. The two disciples sent forth to make ready have found the man bearing the pitcher of water and have secured the guest chamber of which Jesus spake. All things are now ready ; and with in-

tense longings and with wonderful emotions Christ sits down with his friends at the Paschal board. The hour and the scene are full of sublimity and awe. We expect nothing but tenderness and brotherly love and high ideals and lovely purposes and magnanimous and Christlike deeds upon the part of these disciples who are now admitted to the grandest privileges of the children of God. We expect to see human nature at its best. But alas, we are compelled to look at human nature at its worst. In this sacramental chamber it breaks forth in treason and bitterness and pride and envy and strife and boasting. In this study we have to deal only with pride and the strife. In our future study we will have to deal with the treason and the boasting.

Pride and strife manifest themselves twice and in rapid succession. A great deal was made in those days of the place and position of the guests at the supper-table. The place which a man occupied was considered indicative of his character and ability. It was a mark of his rank. Men were therefore naturally desirous of having chief places. The pride of the disciples showed itself when they attempted to seat themselves at the Passover table. They fell into unseemly contention, each claiming the highest and most honorable seat. They thought that the seat which they now had would define their future position in Christ's kingdom. They had carnal views of the kingdom. The contention left them with ruffled tempers and in much dissatisfaction. What an

unseemly exhibition of human nature was this to force upon the vision of Christ! How it must have clashed with his inner life, and with his dying love which felt itself in the presence of the cross!

We have not told all; pride and contention broke out again. It was customary for some one to wash the feet of guests at the supper-table. This was easily done, for the guests upon entering the dining-room laid aside their loose-fitting sandals and reclined at the table with unshod feet. Usually the servant of the host performed this service. As this upper chamber was simply borrowed for the occasion, there was no host with his servant. The question was, Which one of the disciples will volunteer to take the place of the absent servant and perform this act of hospitality? Not one volunteered. Not one had humility enough. They were all too proud. It is just here that the Scripture for study comes in. It tells us that what the disciples were too proud to do Christ did. Taking the water and the basin which were in waiting, and girding himself with a towel, he washed the feet of all—the feet of the proud and of the boaster and of the traitor. Thus he rebuked their pride and contention and taught them the grace of humility.

I. THE SCRIPTURE ANALYZED.

1. *The Scripture begins with a preface.*

This seems a natural thing, because the writer is entering upon a new section of the Gospel. He

is leaving the story of Christ's life and taking up the story of his death.

The design of the preface is to use contrast in setting Christ forth in these closing scenes of his life. He contrasts with his disciples. They forsake him, deny him, betray him; he loves them to the end. They grieve him; he consoles them. They sin against him; he forgives them. They neglect to wash his feet; he washes theirs. What a contrast! But it is all declarative of the glory of Christ; hence John records it.

Not only does the preface show the contrast between Christ and his disciples, it shows the contrast between the lowly act of Christ in washing his disciples' feet and his great and glorious nature. It identifies him with the Father in heaven. It tells us that he performed this lowly act just as he was about to leave this world and ascend to the glory on high. It opens his inner life and allows us to see that he performed this lowly act when he was swayed with the consciousness of his deity and while his heart was filled with great thoughts. This is part of the preface: "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God; he rose from supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself." Jesus was conscious of his deity when he washed the feet of his disciples. This magnifies the act; it transfigures it with love and condescension. It also instructs us concerning humility. Humility does not consist in self-depreciation or in underrating

one's self. The humble man is conscious of his talents and ability. If he have greater natural gifts than his neighbor, he knows that. His humility consists in his willingness to use his great gifts, of which he is conscious, in lowly and needful acts. His humility leads him to consider the doing of lowly acts an honor and a duty. With humility the one question is, What is duty? What is the right and fitting thing to do? What is the right and fitting position to fill? It never asks the question, What do men think? or, How will I look? That is the question of pride and not of humility. Whatever is the right thing to do, humility esteems it to be the great thing. Whatever is the right position to fill humility considers the honorable position. I believe that washing the feet of his disciples was as pleasing to Jesus Christ as riding to glory in the Shechinah chariot amid the glad songs of the angels. This was so because washing the feet of his disciples was the very thing requisite to be done. It was what the world to the end of time needed, it was what the glory of God needed for its proper manifestation.

2. The Scripture fully describes the lowly act of Christ.

Everything is detailed here: the thoughts which were passing through the soul of Christ, how he began the washing, how he assumed the servant's costume and manner, and how he closed the ceremony. The narrative dwells on the conduct of Peter and the conversation between him and Christ.

When Christ reached Peter, the apostle acted out his impulsive nature. He declared that Christ should never wash his feet. Like the other disciples, he was cut to the quick by Christ's act. He looked upon Christ's act as a stinging rebuke to his pride and his unsanctified ambition, which led him to take part in the contention for place and honor. He considered the act humiliating to Christ, the Son of God. He could see him raise the dead, heal the sick, and do other Godlike acts; but this act of washing his feet was altogether out of place and below Christ. "Far be this from thee, Lord." "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Perhaps Peter thought his refusal was humility, but it was not. It was easier for him to push Christ away than it was to submit to having his feet washed by Christ. Pushing Christ away was shunning the rebuke which he deserved; submitting to the ablution was humbly taking the rebuke and submitting to the rod. Peter needed the rebuke, so Christ compelled him to take it. The washing brought down his pride. The washing made Christ's rebuke effective.

When Peter found that he must submit he went to another extreme. When Christ told him that if He washed him not he could have no part with Him, then Peter wanted Him to wash him from head to foot. Both in his refusal and in his proposal he was under the sway of presumption. It is presumption not to take all that Christ wants to give, and it is presumption to demand more or to claim more than Christ gives. Humility con-

sists in accepting all of the gifts of God's free grace and in conforming absolutely to the divine will. Some spiritualize the words of Christ to Peter. This may be right, and the words of Christ may be able to bear what is read into them ; but I am satisfied to confine them altogether to this incident, and make them mean nothing more than this, namely, In all things you must submit to my dictation and bury your will in mine, for my will is perfect and reasonable and complete. It is not requisite to spiritualize the words of Christ, because everything which is read into them is found elsewhere in the divine Word and in its legitimate place.

3. *The Scripture explains the act of Christ as symbolic.*

The explanation recorded by the Scripture was given by Christ himself. When he had finished the washing and had resumed his place at the head of the table, he told his disciples that his act was a talking act. He told them that it was meant to inculcate the grace of humility. He told them that they were mistaken in their ideas of what constituted greatness. He told them that this act of his, lowly as it was, was becoming to him who was their Lord and Master. Thus he taught them that greatness consisted in service. The greatest servant among them was the greatest man among them. He told them that he had given them an abiding example to illustrate the spirit of true humility, which he wished his disciples to cultivate. He told them that if they wanted happiness

and growth in the divine life they must reproduce him and live by his spirit.

Was Christ's symbolic teaching upon the grace of humility effective? It certainly was. The most stubborn pupil which Christ had that day was Simon Peter. We may well take him as an index of the class which Jesus taught. If the lesson told upon him, we may conclude that it told upon the great majority. If we turn to the Epistle written by Peter, we find that among the things which he treated and which he enjoined was this very grace of humility. And what does he say? He gives it the highest rank among the graces. He enjoins us to be constantly wrapped up and enfolded in it. He prescribes humility as a constant garment. "Be clothed with humility." This is a striking figure and one calculated to give us confidence in the grace of humility. God through Peter commands us to treat it as a robe. All the robes of God's provision are beautiful. Look at the splendor of his own vesture! "He clothes himself with light as with a garment." Look at the robes in which he has decked nature! The clouds are arrayed in silver and purple, in crimson and gold. The meadows in green, the grain-fields in rich yellow, and the autumnal forests in sunset splendors are magnificent. So are the lilies in their vestal white. God is a true judge of robes. We can trust him when he prescribes robes for the immortal soul which he has created in his own image. When he tells us that the robes of our self-righteousness are as filthy rags, and when he commands

us to be clothed with humility, we should feel that the soul is most attractive in this garment. Christian, would you see how the garment of humility looks? Behold the Son of God in his infinite condescension among his disciples. Humility is a robe which the Son of God can wear. It is when clad in it that we see his deity. It is when clad in it that he is most attractive to us.

II. QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRISTIAN HUMILITY.

These questions we must ask rapidly.

Question 1. *What is humility?*

Defined by this Scripture, humility is a willingness to do lowly acts and to occupy lowly places for the glory of God. We can learn what humility is by its opposite. Its opposite is pride. Pride brings with it jealousy and love of preëminence and envy and ostentation and self-conceit and high thoughts and contention. After conversion the saints receive their greatest injuries from pride. Now if we are to get rid of pride we must crowd it out of our nature by bringing in humility. Humility is the opposite of pride.

Question 2. *Where can we find the truest and most perfect type of humility?*

In Christ. In the Christ of this Scripture. Christ washing the feet of his disciples is the truest and highest type of humility. We should never lose sight of the fact that Christ is our pattern. We are called to imitate him. Some one has said, If you would become a painter, take the pencil and study Raphael; if you would become a

sculptor, take the chisel and study Phidias; if you would become a poet, take the pen and study Homer; but if you would become a Christian, take the New Testament and study Christ. Contemplate him until you can call riches dust, worldly splendors toys, and until you can feel that true glory is to be like him, meek and lowly of heart.

Question 3. *How does God seek to secure humility in his disciples?*

(a.) *By bringing them into the presence of a perfect God, that they may measure themselves by him.*

He reveals God by his earthly life, and thus brings them into God's presence. Our estimate of self depends altogether upon the ideal or rule by which we measure ourselves. Let the Pharisee measure himself by the publican, and he will feel his greatness. Let Job compare himself with his friends, and he will have no difficulty in defending his integrity. When God wants to humble Job He brings him into His own presence and talks with him from the whirlwind. It is in the presence of God that Job falls upon the ground and cries, "I abhor myself." Christ brings his disciples into the presence of God and makes them feel the reach and the spirituality of his law, and in this way humbles them by a revelation of their defects.

(b.) *By saving them through grace.*

Salvation by grace takes away all ground for boasting. It reveals our nothingness. It gives all the glory to God.

(c.) *By assigning them large tasks.*

He gives them commandments to obey. He gives them his example to reproduce. "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." "It is the men who stand in the midst of the unattempted tasks who are proud. It is the narrowness of our lives that makes us proud." The men who have attempted to be like Christ and to carry on his cause, and who have seen how far they have come short, these are they who are modest and humble. The men who see the unattained heights are the men who feel that they are away down in the valley. Striving to reproduce Christ is enough to keep a man humble for a lifetime. This Christ knew when he assigned to the Christian this task.

(d.) *By his rebuke of pride.*

More than once did Christ rebuke men for pride. Washing the feet of his disciples was a rebuke. Setting a child in the midst of his contending disciples was a rebuke. The parable of the Pharisee and publican at prayer in the Temple was a rebuke. This is a masterpiece of reproof. It burns with scorn and indignation, its words are like arrows of fire, and yet it carries with it the judgment and the common sense of the world. It is tremendously keen and cutting, and yet it gives us pleasure to read it. It was a bold thing for Jesus to utter that parable; it was a piece of thrilling heroism. It was as much as his life was worth. It shows how fatal he considered pride and how highly he esteemed humility. These rebukes of Christ are the precious treasures of the church;

they emphasize his mind and will and act as an impetus in pressing us on to a higher attainment of humility.

A CLOSING POINT.

Humility is the road to honor.

It was such in the experience of Christ. "Because he humbled himself and became obedient to the death of the cross, therefore hath God highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name." The Bible explicitly declares that before honor is humility. We cannot forget the words of Christ himself concerning the humble publican who smote upon his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Contrasting him with the proud Pharisee who preached to God instead of praying, Jesus said, "I tell you that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted, but whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased." The water-drop looks down from the cloud upon the ripe fruit which hangs upon the tree. It envies the water turned into sweetness. It covets a place in the rosy apple. How can it reach such a place of honor? Only by humility. It must come to the ground, lose itself in the soil, go down to the very roots of the tree, and slowly work its way up through trunk and branch. This is the only way. The course of the water-drop is typical of the course by which man reaches his coveted ideals. The way to the throne is through the cross. Thus it was with Christ. Thus it is

with all the disciples of Christ. Tribulations and conflicts are associated with white robes and crowns. While this is true, it is also true that white robes and crowns are associated with tribulations and conflicts. Those who are one with Christ in his humiliation will also be one with Christ in his exaltation. Lazarus at the gate will some day be Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.

CHRIST COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES.

"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED."—*John 14:1.*

IN the study of the fourteenth chapter of John I wish to do two things: First to give the chapter in outline; second, to derive from it the things which should be in every man's life to ennoble and comfort.

THE CHAPTER IN OUTLINE.

In outlining the chapter we should never lose sight of this fact: The chapter has a unity. It is a sermon preached upon the text, "Let not your heart be troubled." Every sentence in it is intended to present some antidote for the troubled heart. The chapter is valuable because it teaches us how Christ comforts his own, and because it initiates us in the art of administering consolation.

In comforting and ennobling man Christ begins with God. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." That is the only way to begin. Let there be right conceptions of God and right relations to God, and everything else will be right in man's life. Right conceptions of God, right relations to God! These phrases call out two questions.

Question 1. *How are we to look at God that we may reach right conceptions of him?*

We are to look at him as seen in Christ, i. e.,

rounded out and made historic. God has written concerning himself upon the manuscripts of the sky and the earth. These revelations are sublime. When he writes upon the sky he uses blazing worlds as an alphabet; when he writes upon the broad pages of the earth he uses the gray rocks and the green foliage and the burning flowers as an alphabet. But the revelation of God in nature, grand as it is, is nothing like the revelation of God which we have in the personality and life of Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus of Nazareth we have a living voice and a beating heart and immortal faculties in operation. Stars and stones and flowers are nothing to these. The whole of divine revelation is one in saying to us, If you would know God, study Christ, for Christ is God incarnated.

Question 2. *In what do right relations with God consist?*

Christ sums up right relations with God in one word, namely, "FAITH," "*belief*." "Ye believe in God; believe also in me." Believing is the highest homage that we can pay to God. Faith honors every attribute of his nature, and every attribute of his nature responds to and honors faith. The man who is shielded by every attribute of God and who is helped by every attribute of God need not be plagued by a troubled heart.

Having prescribed faith as an antidote for sorrow, Christ next tells his disciples to balance the dark present by the glorious future. It is at this point that he opens heaven to them. And most beautiful and vivid is heaven as he sets it forth.

What would this world do without the hope of heaven? To many and many the hope of heaven is the only comfort they have. But this hope is more precious to them than gold. The day is coming when they will know no tears. You see how Christ strengthens and consoles. He uses contrasts. He puts his glorious return against his painful going, the future against the present, the promises made to faith against the apparent fatality of circumstances. He banishes gloom by introducing glory.

At this point the address of Christ turns into the form of dialogue. With a reverent freedom the disciples ask him questions. It was Christ's design that they should. He put his assertions in a form calculated to call forth queries. The questions asked bring out great facts concerning himself—facts like these: "Christ is the way and the truth and the life." Christ is the revelation of the Father: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Christ's works and words prove his deity: "Believe me for my works' sake." "The words that I speak are not mine, but the Father's." The questions asked bring out also the slowness of the disciples to learn. "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" The church has had Christ eighteen hundred years, and still he is the great Unknown. Notwithstanding he is with us in the presence and power of the Spirit, in the ordinances and institutions of the church, in the triumphs of his truth, and in the trophies of his grace, yet his disciples

have only imperfect views of his grace and glory. There are chapters in the divine Word which pertain to him that we have never studied. In comparing what we know of him with what remains to be known of him, Christ is as yet the great Unknown in our lives. We of the nineteenth century deserve the reproof administered to Philip of the first century.

Having answered the questions of Thomas and Philip, Jesus takes up the thread of his discourse at the place where it was broken, and continues to comfort his disciples by pointing out the advantages of his going. He contrasts his staying and his going, and shows that his going meant more to him and more to them. They would gain by his going, because in his exalted state, as the possessor of all power, he would give them energy to carry forward his work with greater effectiveness. They would even do greater works than he had done. Thus he filled their minds with thoughts of work and with the contemplation of a glowing future. There is no better way of breathing life and comfort into men. And was his prediction concerning their future fulfilled? Have his disciples done greater works than his? Yes. They started off with three thousand converts on the very first day. Christ never converted three thousand in any single day during his brief career. Christianity, with its wonderful progress and wonderful products, is the miracle of the ages. Think of it! It has given the world great men and great institutions and great blessings. "At first it was

only a dot upon the map of the world ; now whole continents are subdued and bannered."

When Jesus had painted the advantages of his going, he next consoled his disciples by giving them many and precious promises. These were calculated to drive anxiety and dark thoughts away from the soul and to arouse all the energies of the soul in uplifting action. These were magnificent helps to faith. He promised them the coming and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This meant spiritual communion, the communication of spiritual life, and the consciousness of indissoluble oneness with Christ. This meant the fulness of the truth and a glorified Christ, for Christ said concerning the coming Spirit, "He shall glorify me," and "He shall lead you into all truth." He promised them the gift of his own peace: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." We can do without the best things which the world gives, but we cannot do without Christ's abiding gift of peace, which keeps our hearts and minds. What is this peace? An apostle says, "It is the peace of God which passeth all understanding." It can be felt in the inner consciousness of the soul; it can be seen in the courage and consistency and hope and resignation and calm of the Christian life as the child of God stands like a rock in the raging storm; but it cannot be put into intelligible words. The grandest and deepest things of life have always been the inexpressible.

Christ closes his comforting sermon by telling his disciples that in leaving them that he may go to his cross and his conflict he finds the purpose of his coming into the world. If he remained with them, as they desired, his life would be a failure, and the covenant of grace, whereby men are saved, would be a void and worthless thing. His going meant the salvation of man through the atonement of the cross. When understood in its true light, his going to his grand mission ought to be the occasion of joy to the disciples and not of sorrow. The angels, the first-born sons of God, shouted aloud for joy over the work of creation; the whole universe should shout aloud for joy over the work of redemption. It was to the work of redemption that Christ went forth. With this thrilling thought this magnificent fourteenth chapter of John closes. Having finished his farewell address with this thought, Christ called upon his disciples to sing together the grand *Hallel* from the inspired book of praise, and he joined them in the singing. This Hallel was composed of the 116th, 117th, and 118th Psalms. Most suitable was this Hallel or hallelujah for the occasion. It anticipated this very hour and foretold the redeeming work of Christ. Listen to the way it closes:

“The stone which the builders rejected
Is become the head of the corner.
This is the doing of the Lord;
It is marvellous in our eyes.
Save now, O Lord; send now salvation!
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,
Who cometh for our salvation.

This is the day Jehovah hath made;
Let us rejoice in it and be glad.
A mighty God is Jehovah, and he giveth us light.
Bind the sacrifice with cords upon the altar.
Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee;
Thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
Oh give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good,
For his mercy endureth for ever."

WHAT THINGS DOES THIS CHAPTER BID US TO PUT
INTO OUR LIVES TO ENNOBLE AND TO COMFORT?

The question is designed to wheel the immortal words of Jesus into telling service and to perpetuate their influence. Thou hast given us, O God, these lives of ours to construct and to use. Teach us, we pray thee, how to construct them and how to use them. Teach us how to protect them against paralyzing griefs. This chapter is God's reply uttered by the lips of his Son. The reply is threefold.

1. *Fill life with faith in God, if you would ennoble it and make it replete with comfort.*

There is no grand life apart from faith in God, and there is no true faith in God apart from faith in Christ, the only mediator between God and man. This is what this chapter rings out. This is the alpha and the omega of this farewell of Christ. It exalts the joy and peace of believing. It declares that faith in God drives out fear with its torments, because fear dwarfs and paralyzes the Christian in every conceivable way. The great cry of this chapter is "*trust*," "TRUST," "TRUST." "Believe in God; believe also in me." When you

are in trial, trust in God. When you are battling with temptation, trust in God. When you are entering upon conflict and labor, trust in God. When your heart is rent and torn by the separations of bereavement, trust in God. What in God shall we trust? Trust his love; trust his wisdom; trust his power; trust his justice; trust his covenant; trust his pledged word. By faith build your whole life upon the nature of God as the wise man builds his house upon the solid rock.

Of one thing be assured, that faith in God is equal to any task and to any crisis. It is equal to these because it brings God into a man's personality. God's wisdom acts and thinks through his brain; God's holiness acts in and impels his conscience; God's love inhabits and finds an outcome through his affections; God's power hides itself and throbs in his arm. Faith is the conducting pipe running from the reservoir to the fountain: the conducting pipe puts all the fulness of the reservoir at the disposal of the fountain. When the fulness of the reservoir flows through the fountain there is a grand outburst of the crystal water. A miniature cataract plays in the air. Diamond drops, silver spray, and tinted rainbows—all these sparkle before the beholder, for all these are the product of the over-full fountain. When faith connects man and God, the very fulness of God flows into man, and the work of God in the man's life is sublime. Divine loves, divine joys, divine principles, divine habitudes, divine deeds, divine victories—all these appear in the man's history and

beautify his life. The man becomes a living fountain of spiritual water in the world of humanity. To use the words of the Master himself, He is "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

2. *Fill life with prayer, if you would ennoble it and make it replete with comfort.*

No prayerless life can either be comfortable or great. No man is equal to the crises of life who does not pray. Prayer puts our life into God's hand to be shaped and guided and protected. Prayer puts God with his infinite attributes into connection with us that we may use them in our heaven-assigned tasks. Christ could not live his human life without prayer; neither can we. He spent whole nights in prayer; and no one can tell the outcome of power attributable to those nights. The perfection of his human life came out of them. Prayer brought him the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Prayer brought him his transfiguration upon the mount. Prayer carried him through Gethsemane. Of Gethsemane it is written, "Being in agony, he prayed; and an angel came and strengthened him." Christ knew the power of prayer, and so when he found his disciples troubled in heart he told them to pray, and he set before them in his farewell address the power of prayer.

I would have you notice, brethren, that in this fourteenth chapter of John Christ gives prayer a new power as he puts it afresh into the hands of his disciples. Prayer was a wonderful power under the Old Testament; but he makes it a greater power under the New Testament. Was it

not a wonderful power under the Old Testament? See Moses praying Israel out of Egypt to the very border of the promised land. If it had not been for prayer, he could not have carried them one-half of the way. Time after time his prayer turned aside the thunderbolt of destruction. See Elijah praying the Hebrew reformation through to a glorious climax! Yes; prayer was a wonderful power under the Old Testament dispensation. But Christ adds to its force. He gives it what it never had before, the power of his own name. What does his name mean? It means his grand personality, his love-fulfilling life, his penalty-bearing death. It means the covenant of grace fulfilled. It means that he has purchased for us the blessing for which we pray. We know that Christ by his coming and work has heightened praise and has given it a new sweep. He has called forth new songs. Mary sang a new song, and so did the aged Simeon, and so did thousands of other sweet singers. He has not only called out new songs, but he has broadened and widened the old songs. He made a new Psalm out of the twenty-fourth and a new Psalm out of the sixteenth. As Jesus has given praise a new sweep and a new power, even so has he given prayer a new sweep and a new power. This increase in the power of prayer is part of the reward of his humiliation. It is so set forth by Paul in his letter to the Philippians. In enumerating the rewards which the Father gives him he writes, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a

name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow." The old version of the New Testament renders Paul's words, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow;" but the Revised Version gives the true meaning of the Greek and renders it, "In the name of Jesus every knee should bow." That is, prayer should be made in his name, and the answers of prayer shall proclaim the greatness of his atoning work and its far-reaching effects. The effectiveness of prayer, now that it has added to it the power of Christ's redemptive work, seems almost limitless. Mark Christ's own words in this chapter: "Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; but now whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." With this new power New Testament men ought to be able to do far more by means of prayer than the Old Testament men did. We need to be taught concerning the value and power of prayer. We need to be urged to a greater use of prayer. We need to be lifted to a faith in prayer like that which these disciples reached. In after life they realized the truth of what Christ said. One wrote, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Another wrote, "Whatsoever we ask we receive of him;" "And this is the confidence which we have in him, that whatsoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us." When I look at the new power which prayer has under the New Testament economy, I have no hesitancy in saying that when we are weak and

despondent in life, the reason is we are prayerless.

3. *Fill life with large anticipations of heaven, if you would ennoble it and make it replete with comfort.*

You can readily see what heaven does when it is put into a man's life. It gives grand ideals. It makes him dissatisfied with the low and carnal. It keeps before him his true home. It emphasizes his pilgrim character here on earth. Such emphasis is beneficial in that it secures the right use of the world. It subordinates the world to the soul. It feeds the imagination and consecrates it to God. It floods the earthly life with rays of glory and joy, and these rays brighten life, just as the natural sun-rays give the fields their brilliant flowers and the cloud-land its mountains of crimson and gold.

When a man takes a firm grip upon heaven ; or rather, when heaven takes a grip upon a man, two things are the result. First, the man tries to bring heaven down to earth and aims at cultivating the heaven-spirit. He brings to earth heaven's worship, heaven's purity, heaven's communion, and heaven's harmony with the will of God. Second, the man tries to become meet for heaven. There must be a preparation of the saint for heaven as well as a preparation of heaven for the saint. He aims at building up a character which he can take with him into the uncreated presence of God. This, as any one can see, ennobles the present life and fills it with comfort. Eliminate from this life the views of heaven and of eternity which Christ gives his people, and that moment you make life

narrow and selfish and sordid and carnal. That moment you bury the noblest faculties of man, and make the animal nature the coffin of the spiritual nature.

Do you ask me, What is there in my look heavenward that sustains me in life and gives purity and joy? I answer, The beauty and grandeur of heaven charm me. That beauty is so superlative that it cannot be pictured. Human language has not yet framed the words or built up the analogies necessary. The fellowships of heaven charm me. These in themselves would be enough, if heaven as a place were as ugly as sin. Fellowships are away beyond place. It is the presence of the king that makes a place the palace; and it is the presence of friends that makes the place a home. I receive joy from the anticipation of heaven, because I shall meet there those whom I love, and I shall see face to face there Christ whom I worship.

The perfection of the human in heaven into which I shall be introduced charms me. This to me is the charm of all charms, viz., realizing in myself God's perfect ideal for the immortal soul, reaching the climaxes of possibilities and bounding out into infinite progress. But what is it to realize God's ideal? It is to become the moral facsimile of Jesus Christ. This is the way John puts it: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God: but it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but when he who is our life shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." The grandest thing that I can see in looking heavenward is like-

ness to Jesus Christ, sharing with him his perfect humanity and his communicable attributes as God. If there be anything beyond this, what is it? The friends of Rowland Hill stood around that eminent minister of God, as he was on his death-bed, and repeated to him for his comfort the things pertaining to Christ's divine sonship. They closed by telling him that he would soon see Jesus. The good man responded, "Brethren, that is not all; that is only the least thing, seeing Jesus: I shall be like him, pure as he is pure." Likeness in purity to Jesus Christ, that is the chief thing. You may tell the dying saint of the goodly mansions, built on the streets of gold, beneath the branches of the tree of life, and close by the banks of the river of life. You may tell him of thrones and crowns and palms and sceptres and robes and harps and celestial whiteness: but these splendors are all outside of himself. If you would fill a dying saint with rapture, tell him that he will resemble his Lord, and that all the deformities and scars of sin will pass away, and that he will live for ever in the stately beauty of holiness. Tell him this, and you magnify the power of heaven a thousand-fold. This is the great fact upon which to ring the changes: heaven, that city of mansions and of pearly gates and of golden streets and of jasper walls, heaven, that glorious capital of the skies, is matched in its glory and its beauty by the glory and the beauty of its eternal citizens, who are all the sons of God and who all resemble God.

CHRIST THE TRUE VINE.

"I AM THE VINE, YE ARE THE BRANCHES."—*John 15:5.*

JESUS, the great Teacher, spake as man never spake. It is refreshing to hear him talk upon his wonderful themes. By him the water of ordinary speech was turned into wine. By his chaste words and thrilling similes and vivid pictures truth was made to live, heaven was brought down to earth, doors were opened into the far-away future, and golden visions were thrown into the darkened mind as the sunburst of the morning is thrown into night.

As we read the conversations of Jesus, so full of magnificent conceptions, and picture out to ourselves tender scenes like the one before us, there is a voice within us which whispers, "Oh to have been one of the company which gathered around him!" To the wish we answer at first thought, "Yes;" but to it we answer at second thought, "No." We have advantages beyond his first disciples who looked into his face and listened to the great thoughts and facts uttered by his physical voice. These facts and thoughts were to them as unsolved problems. They were things to be wrought out by a testing experience. They were in marked contrast with the surroundings of Christ. His claims and his circumstances clashed. Such is not the case now. The problems have been solved.

Christ's claims have all been tested and proved. His great thoughts and facts have grown greater. The world sees him now as he saw himself eighteen hundred years ago. Back in the centuries he said, "I am the light of the world," and the Pharisees laughed and the scribes passed his saying around as a jest. How does that claim of his appear to-day? Look on the map of the world and you will get a reply. Christlessness in this nineteenth century means dark continents, but Christ and Christian churches mean lands of light. Back in the centuries Christ said to his disciples, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," and his disciples wondered what he could mean. But look at that saying now! It has been explained by centuries of Christian faith and Christian oneness of believers with Christ, and by the Christlike lives of his followers.

Allow me an illustration. The unseemly bulb, which has in it unseen symmetry of form and beauty of color and unrealized delights of fragrance, says, "I am the beauty of the garden. I can thrill you with my fragrance; prize me and esteem me." Unaccustomed to bulbs and unable to understand it, it appears to you to be nothing more than a poor haggard old root. You read very little into its words and promises. But let it be put into the grim earth; give it the seasons; let sun and soil and dew test its powers and claims. Stand before it when it reaches its development, when its flowers exhale its incense. See it just as it saw itself when it claimed to be the beauty of

the garden. Now you read something into its words and now you appreciate it. Men eighteen hundred years ago, in dealing with Jesus Christ, were dealing with the bulb, the root out of dry ground. We to-day, in dealing with Jesus Christ, are dealing with the flower in its beauty and symmetry, waving in the sunlight as a golden censer. The ages have taken up the words of Christ and have emphasized them and expounded them and verified them and illustrated them. To go no further than our text, we can understand its words better and accept them more readily because of the lives which have been lived by faith in Christ. When we put Christ and John together, Christ and Peter together, Christ and Augustine together, Christ and Calvin together, Christ and Luther together, Christ and Knox together, we see great beauty and meaning and comfort in the words, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." Christ lived in these men and they owed all to him. Christ was the vine and they were the branches.

I. THERE IS A REAL UNION BETWEEN CHRIST THE VINE AND CHRISTIANS THE BRANCHES.

Such is the unity between the vine and the branch that you destroy the symmetry of both if you break the unity. The vine is wounded and scarred, and so is the branch. Nature meant them to be one. Nature made them one. They both live to keep the unity. They both fight the storm which would sever them. So real and palpable is the union between the vine and the branches that

it is absurd to try to prove it. It needs no proof; you see it. That constitutes the beauty and strength of this simile.

To the believer Christ says, There is a real union between you and me. As the materials in the vine are united, so our spiritual natures are united. The *reality* of the union is the point which we press now, not the similarity. There is a dissimilarity, because material and spiritual things are dissimilar. For example, in order for union in material things, nearness or contiguity is required. For a united temple, stone must rest upon stone from the foundation to the pinnacle. But nearness or contiguity is no element in spiritual union. You are one with an absent friend, although you are in New York and he is in London. You hold fellowship with him and feel the beating of his love. Thus we even commune with friends who are dead. You are on earth, Christ is in heaven; but faith pictures Christ, gives him a living form, and brings him into the soul.

Most strikingly is the reality of the union between Christ and the believer set forth in actual life by the Bible. It is set forth in the sensitiveness of Christ to the feelings and the experiences of his people, and by the consciousness of his nearness which his people have at all times, but especially in the times of need. Illustrative examples crowd the mind. The Christians are persecuted by Saul of Tarsus, and Christ in heaven thrills with their woes, speeds from the throne to the gates of heaven, and cries to the persecutor in his

madness, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me!" You feel the indignity heaped upon your friend, the slander uttered against him, the accident which befalls him, because you are one with him. The union between him and you is so real, although of a spiritual character, that you account the indignities and wrongs done to him as though they were done to you. Thus it is with Christ and his. The feelings which thrill through him in heaven because of the treatment of his people on earth prove it. He who touches the saint touches the apple of His eye.

II. THERE IS ONENESS OF LIFE BETWEEN CHRIST THE VINE AND CHRISTIANS THE BRANCHES.

The very life that courses in the vine courses through the branches. It throbs in every tendril and in the smallest fibre of the utmost leaf. It animates every atom and particle.

This is exactly what is true in the spiritual union between Christ and Christians. Paul asserts it in this fragment of a sentence, "Christ is our life." Christ himself declares it in this brief but full promise, "Because I live ye shall live also." The same great fact was presented in the Old Testament, where God said of his people, "I will dwell in them and walk in them." John, the disciple of love, sets it forth. He says, "In Him dwelleth all fulness, and of his fulness have we received and grace for grace." Peter also adds his voice, "We are made partakers of the divine nature." From these and other Scriptures which the simile of

Christ embodies we are made to feel that we are dependent on Christ for our spiritual life, and that he is inexhaustible as a supply. In our relation to him we are like the earth in its relation to the sun. The sun may be distant 92,000,000 miles, yet from it our earth receives its heat and light and beauty and vegetative power. Christ may be in heaven, but he sustains our life on earth.

When we talk of Christ dwelling in his people we are not talking of a fancy or affection. There is mystery about it, true, but then it is a fact which can be dealt with and seen and accepted. There are many mysteries with which we deal and which we accept and use. Life is a mystery, yet we deal with it and accept it. A noted scholar has said, "The word *life* wanders through science to-day without a definition." The difficulties and mysteries of religion are nothing more or less than the difficulties and mysteries of nature. Point out a difficulty in religion, and a corresponding difficulty in nature can be pointed out. It is not a fancy to say that one spirit dwells in and lives in and through another. It is a fact with which we are acquainted. We familiarly talk about it. We admit that the demon lives in and through the demon-possessed. We talk of the general living in his army. He has the power of piercing the souls of his soldiers by his enthusiasm and courage. His daring burns in them. It finds its outcome in the rally and in the fearless charge upon the field. The scholar who is enwrapped with his teacher opens his nature to that teacher, and that teacher

enters into him. The scholar becomes the animated image of that teacher. The teacher's ideas are in him, the teacher's mental habits, sympathies, loves, character. The teacher lifts him up to himself, and so far as the scholar has capacity to receive he makes him one with him; he makes him his equal. He transfigures him until there is but little of the old self in him. The poet put our thought in a way that we can see it:

"The tidal-wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares."

III. THERE IS A ONENESS OF MANIFESTATION OR FRUITAGE UPON THE PART OF THE LIFE WHICH IS IN CHRIST THE VINE AND CHRISTIANS THE BRANCHES.

In nature we see that the life which is in the vine, and which passes into the branches, works itself out and embodies itself in fruit. There it is in the rich purple clusters. The fruit is not of two kinds, one of the vine and another of the branch; *the fruit is one*, and it embodies the one life.

Christ in the believer seeks an outcome in life. The man who is Christ-full abounds in the fruits of the Spirit. Christ, wherever he is, must be active. He must be putting himself and his energies into holy and loving deeds. Look at Jesus of Nazareth as you see him in the days of his flesh! Could you have surpassed the life which he lived

then? No. He lived it as the absolute necessity of his attributes. His nature was irrepressible. It embodied itself in teaching and in deeds of kindness and in extended sympathies and in journeys of mercy. It was *necessary* for him to live as he did and to build up the character which he did. When the suffering woman touched him, virtue to heal leaped from him unbidden. It would have required a miracle to have made it act otherwise; thus spontaneous was the whole of Christ's grand and perfect life. Now our point is this: Jesus of Nazareth is the Jesus who is the believer. In the believer he must, according to the impulses of his nature, reproduce his earth-life and continue to do the deeds of Judæa. He must live in his people as he lived in his own humanity. When Christ lives in Paul, then Paul preaches and sacrifices and weeps over sinners. It was the yearning Christ in Paul that exclaimed, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." It was Christ in Paul who wept over the carnality of men. What we want to mark is *the oneness of the fruit* produced through the branch Paul united to the Vine Christ. Paul recognized it. Christ and Paul worked together, and there was no dividing and separating Christ and Paul in the labors which resulted from this union. No one could say, This much is Paul and that much is Christ. Christ lived in and through Paul in a way not to be divided from Paul. "I live," says Paul, and then he adds, "yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me." The life in the fruit is one and indivisible. It is the Christ-life. The

light which comes from the sun and the light reflected by the moon is one and the same light. The call uttered by the living voice and given back in an echo by the forest is one call. It would be absurd for the plant to ask the gardener, How much of this fruit is I and how much soil and dew?

I imagine some one says, If this be the case, then we might as well have been made alike, the fac-similes of one another; for when Christ takes hold of us and lives in and through us we lose our individuality. *No, we do not.* Christ lives through *our individuality*. The organ does not lose its individuality when the master musician pours his music through it; neither does the cornet nor the flute. The same composition is rendered through each by the same musician, and each holds its individuality. So John is John, and Paul is Paul, and James is James, and Thomas is Thomas, and Christ lives in them all. An enterprising botanist cultivated a rosebush into which he grafted twenty varieties of exquisite flowers. The bush was full of beauty. There were all gradations of form and color there thriving on one stem. Viewed apart, each rose was fair and fragrant and carried its own individuality. Taken together the bush was matchless, filling the atmosphere with fragrance. This is the type of the church, which is being wrought into a glorious transcript of Christ. Every member is beautiful with Christ's beauty and embodying in real life Christ's communicable attributes; but at the same time every member retains his own individuality.

From our study of this simile of Christ, which sets forth the vital relation between him and Christians, there are two lessons which we ought to take with us:

1. *Christ can make us magnificent and grand.*

He can do for us what the vine does for the branch. He can make us like himself. Is there anything possible to humanity beyond likeness to Christ? Is there anything that can satisfy so completely our highest ideals and yearnings and instincts?

When we look on into the future, likeness to Christ is our highest conception. Take for example the future of these bodies of ours! We wonder what they shall be. We hope for grand things concerning them—incorruption, immortality, spirituality. We search for one phrase by which to set forth their future in a clear, crisp, definite, and intelligent way. That one phrase we find. And what is it? It is this: "The body of our humiliation shall be fashioned and conformed to the likeness of Christ's glorious resurrection body." To be like Christ in body satisfies us, for there is nothing beyond and there is nothing equal to it. What we say of the body we say of the soul. To be made like Christ is inconceivable grandeur. It is perfection. Now Christ can make us like himself. He has so assimilated his disciples that men have taken knowledge that they have been with Jesus. Behold what he has made out of men! Remember what the fishermen became when He took hold of them! Remember what He made out of Paul!

These men are only types teaching us what we ought to be and what we can be when Christ is formed within us. These men were types of our capacities. They show us what our soul is: not a vessel to be filled; not a block of marble to be wrought upon; but a seed endowed with capacities for growth, seed capable of growing into the pattern of Christ, the archetype.

2. *We become magnificent and grand in proportion as we open our nature to Christ.*

The branch is fruitful only as it takes into itself the life of the vine. The life that is in the vine must be allowed to rush into the thousand pores and veins that are in it. Then and only then will the clusters be abundant and luscious. Branches widely differ from branches, and the differences are accounted for by the degrees of receptivity. The branches that receive most from the vine bear the most fruit.

It is with Christians as it is with branches. There are differences in them. They receive Christ in different degrees. Why does one flower have its cup full of dew, while its neighbor has not so much as the least pearl of dew? It keeps its cup open, while its neighbor closes its cup. There are channels through which Christ communicates himself to men. These are prayer, praise, the Word, the Lord's Supper. As we use these and receive Christ through these, so will he be in us to control us and to beautify us with his graces. Receive Christ and you will see what he will make of you.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“HE SHALL GLORIFY ME.”—*John 16:14.*

THESE words of Jesus when expressed in full read, “He the Spirit will glorify me the Christ.” This statement starts a train of questions. First among these questions is, *Who is the Spirit?* He is the third person of the glorious Trinity. *But what is the Trinity?* This is the second question. The Trinity is the mode of God’s existence. The Bible teaches that there is but one God, and that this one God subsists in three persons.

The Westminster divines thus state the teaching of the Scripture: “There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; these three are one God, the same in substance and equal in power and glory.” That this statement is scriptural there can be no doubt. The baptismal formula shows it and so does the apostolic benediction. But scriptural as it is, it deals with deep things, and we cannot understand it. We cannot make it plain to our minds that three subsist in one. Just here comes in the next question, *Are we expected to believe and use what we cannot understand?* The answer is, You do so in other spheres, and why not in this sphere? If you believe and use only the things which you understand, you will believe and use very few things. The things understood are infinitesimal

in number in comparison with the things not understood. The commonest things about us are unexplained and unexplainable. There is the beautiful flower! Are you not going to use that? You do not understand its construction, how it has been woven with exact skill, how every flower on the one plant is woven after a pattern and with the same colors, as though there were a presiding genius at every loom, how the tints are blended together in perfection and according to the highest taste. There may be a mis-matching of colors in a woman's bonnet, but there is no mis-matching of colors in the wardrobe of nature. Are you going to admit into your life only that which you can understand and explain? Then you are going to annihilate the science of horticulture and keep the flowers out of your life. You cannot understand the growth of the golden grain, the staff of life, any more than you can understand the growth of flowers. Are you going to veto the golden grain and keep it out of your life? We will believe and use only what we can understand! The rule is not a good one in any department of life.

Just here comes in another question, and it is the leading question. It is this: "How would you have us deal with the Trinity so that it may become a reality to us and so that we may use it?" I would have you deal with it practically, for this is the way the Word of God presents it. There are two ways of knowing a thing: we can know it philosophically or we can know it practically. A practical study calls us to deal with effects; a phil-

osophical study calls us to deal with causes and essences. The philosophical study of a thing requires upon our part the knowledge of as much philosophy as is incorporated into the thing to be studied. To know God philosophically we would have to possess a mind equal to God's. It takes a God to understand a God. Hence it is that the Bible never tries to explain the Trinity and never philosophizes upon God's mode of existence. There is a God-side from which to look at the Trinity, and there is a man-side. The Bible tells us to look at it from the man-side, i. e., to deal with the effects which come from the existence and operation of the Trinity. What the flower does makes the flower real to us. Even a blind man can tell it. It freights the air with perfume, and he knows it by its fragrance which shoots through him and gives him pleasure. What the Trinity does makes the Trinity real to us. As each flower has its separate perfume, so each person of the Trinity has his separate attitude and work, and when these are realized they become so distinct that they cannot be mixed. We should deal with these until we get them distinctly before us. When we do the Trinity will be a reality. We should deal with the Trinity practically and not philosophically.

What perfume does the flower manufacture? That is the question. What work does each person of the Godhead do? That is the question. What attitude does each hold to us? If each Person assumes an attitude and does a work, then we

know that there are as many Persons as there are attitudes and works. The First Person assumes the attitude of Father and Designer, the Second Person assumes the attitude of Brother and Executor, the Third Person assumes the attitude of Animator and Applier. These are all separate attitudes and works, and they give vividness to the personality and existence of the Three in One. The Bible calls us to dwell upon these, and that is the way it treats the Trinity.

It is the aim of Christ in this Scripture to make the Spirit real by setting forth his work and emphasizing its incalculable importance. He sums up the Spirit's work and the object of his reign on earth in one single phrase, "He shall glorify me." There is something then in Christ to look upon besides a cross: there is a glory. When the Spirit comforts, when he convicts of sin, when he exhibits the truth of the kingdom, when he sanctifies the immortal soul, he glorifies Christ. He does all that he does by using Christ and the things of Christ. He comforts by unrolling the promises of Christ. He convicts of sin by bringing the sinner into contrast with the perfect, holy, and condemning life of Christ, and by lifting it up as the rule of conduct. He sanctifies the immortal soul by forming within it Christ the hope of glory. Whatever the Spirit does centres in some form in Christ. It is his office-work to act as Christ's vice-gent, and to apply to men Christ and his benefits. All subjective work in our redemption has been committed to Him.

As the work of the Spirit is summed up in this phrase of Christ, "He shall glorify Me," we propose in this study to examine some of the ways in which the Spirit glorifies Christ.

I. THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES CHRIST BY VINDICATING HIS CLAIMS.

To do this is a most important thing. But we expect important things from the coming of the Spirit. Our expectations are based upon the predictions of prophecy which foretold the coming of the reign of the Spirit, and also from the emphasis which Christ gave to his coming. He said that the Spirit's coming would be the enduement of the disciples with power. He said that the coming of the Spirit would be a grand and beneficial exchange for his own going. Better the Spirit's presence than Christ's physical presence. "It is expedient that I go away and that the Spirit come." If this be so, there must be some grand outcome from the presence of the Spirit. There is such an outcome: The presence of the Spirit establishes the claims of Christ.

Christ made great claims for himself. He claimed to be the Son of God. He claimed that he was going to dwell in heaven amid the glory of the Father. He claimed that while there he would work for the interests of his people, and by-and-by would come and receive them to himself to share his risen life and glory. But how are these great claims to be established? How shall the disciples know that he lives in heaven, and that

the Father has accepted of his sacrifice as their surety, and that he is working in glory for them and getting ready to come? Jesus gives them a test. It is a severe test. He says that he will send the Almighty Spirit, who will come and fill them with divine power and who will do divine works through them. That test could not stand if Jesus were not what he claimed to be. If he were an impostor, he could have no control over the Almighty Spirit. The Holy Spirit has nothing to do with impostors. Thus the disciples reasoned; so they accepted the test.

Was the test made good? Yes. On the day of Pentecost, according to the promise of Christ, the Spirit came amid great wonders and filled the disciples and gave them wonderful gifts. To prove to the world that he was in the disciples of Jesus, and that they were the people of God, and their cause was of heaven, he wrought divine miracles through them which no one could gainsay. These miracles continued to be wrought until the Spirit established the fact of his reign on earth.

What have we to say of these things which sound so marvellous and strange? We have this to say: If Pentecost be a fact in history, it is one of the most marvellous of days; for it not only brings a grand power into the Church of God, but it brings also the proof and demonstration of Christ's great claims. He is the Son of God, as he said he was. He is in glory, our accepted sacrifice, our risen and interceding Saviour, as he said he would be. The great and marvellous test

which Christ set up was verified. This is simply a plain statement of facts. This is the way the early disciples looked at things. They raised the cry in their day, "Jesus is glorified, for the Spirit has been given." There is abundant Scripture to show this. Peter and John, in declaring Christ and his resurrection to the Sanhedrin, said, "We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Ghost." Paul, in summing up the facts of the Christian religion, says, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory." The only phrase in his summary pertinent to our purpose is this: "He was justified in the Spirit," or literally translated, "He was vindicated by the Spirit." This is our point exactly. Christ was vindicated in all his holy claims by the Spirit, who came according to his promise, and who to-day carries forward his work on earth. If there were no risen and exalted and glorified and ruling Christ, there would be no Almighty, all-present Spirit comforting and sanctifying and guiding believers and assimilating them to the glorious likeness of Christ.

II. THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES CHRIST BY SETTING FORTH HIS PERSON AND WORK IN CLEAR AND ATTRACTIVE LIGHT.

Jesus said, "He shall take the things which are mine and show them unto you." I do not know that we can better treat this point than by looking

at its exemplification in the disciples among whom Jesus spent his earthly ministry. As we read the gospel history we grow impatient at their slowness in learning of him. They do not recognize his character or fathom his sayings or enter into sympathy with his divine mission. They had false ideals, and they expected him to realize these. They expected him to be a king, but they degraded his kingdom by expecting it to be a carnal kingdom. They never dreamed of that grand spiritual kingdom which Jesus set up. They never dreamed of Christ as king enthroned in the souls of men, and thus ruling their lives. Their ideas of him as a king were wrong; their ideas of him as a prophet were obscure; and as for his priesthood, that was simply a blank. When it was set before them it proved a stumbling-block. The cross with its sacrifice for sin was an offence to them.

Such were the disciples prior to the advent of the Spirit. Let us look at them after the descent of the Holy Ghost. What is Christ to them now that they enjoy the indwelling of the Spirit? Their Christ now is the Christ of the book of the Acts and of the Epistles and of the Apocalypse. They see in him all the grandeur which was typified in the great men of their nation, in their prophets and priests and kings. They see him as "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person." What grander pictures could we have of Christ than those which these disciples draw in the after-writings of the New

Testament? When we look at these pictures, drawn by the aid of the Spirit, we can appreciate the work of glorifying Christ which the Spirit carries forward by giving clear and correct views of Christ.

The difference between the views of Christ and his work with the Spirit and without the Spirit may be illustrated by the difference between stereopticon views looked at by means of the electric light and without the electric light. As you look at the simple glass slides, you cannot discern the details of the pictures. They have no beauty or distinctness. But put the slides into the art lantern, and put the electric light behind them and let it throw the pictures upon the canvas, and lo! they glow before you in a state of transfiguration. Is the scene a picture of London? London is before you in all the vividness of reality—Westminster with its turrets, St. Paul with its dome, the British Museum with its massiveness; the Thames flows in its course and the streets teem with busy traffic. Is the picture that of some noted piece of statuary? The power of the light brings the statue out in its most admired details, and you look upon the masterpiece and get almost as true a conception of it as though you looked upon its very self. Christ without the illumination of the Spirit is like the stereopticon views on the glass slide without the electric light; but Christ with the illumination of the Spirit is like the stereopticon views thrown upon the canvas with the transfiguring power of the light.

When we see him in the illumination of the Spirit amid the glory which belongs to him, we join with the great company of celestial singers introduced by the Apocalypse and with them sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and honor and glory and blessing."

III. THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES CHRIST BY ENLARGING HIS PRESENCE.

So long as Christ was on earth in person he was localized. There was a limit to his physical presence. If he were here now in his human nature, he would be localized; but ascended to the Father that he may be here in the person of the Spirit, who is his substitute, he is omnipresent. Were he here, if John leaned on his bosom Peter could not. If he were in Jerusalem, then London and New York and Boston would have to do without him. In his human nature he could only be in one place at one time. Christ says that the spiritual presence is better than the personal, in view of the work that remains to be done in perfecting saints and pushing the cross to its triumph. The spiritual presence is universal, the bodily or personal presence is local. The Spirit is omnipresent, and Christ in the Spirit is omnipresent.

The difference between the presence of Christ in person and his presence in the Spirit, is like the difference in Mary's ointment-box whole and her ointment-box broken. While whole the sweet fragrance was confined to the box; but when the

box was broken the fragrance filled the whole house. In the house it was omnipresent and all felt the sensations which it gave. Canon Liddon writes, "It may seem strange to say it, but the New Testament does teach that Christ's spiritual presence is a closer and a more intimate presence than the presence of his human nature. They who came nearest to Christ when he was on earth but kissed his feet, lay in his bosom, were led by his hand, or were carried in his arms. This is immeasurably distant in comparison with his dwelling in men, and making the soul a temple through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. They who have the Holy Spirit recognize and possess Christ, not as an external presence or external voice or external touch, but as an internal presence, touch, and voice." What the believers wish most of all is to realize the presence of Christ: his presence in worship, in prayer, in praise, in the Word, in the Lord's Supper, and in the sway of the providences. This is what believers do realize, and they realize it at the same time in regions of the earth far separated. Why is this? The Spirit is everywhere present making Christ real and carrying forward his work.

IV. THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES CHRIST BY ILLUMINATING HIS WORD.

Christ said, "He shall guide you into all truth." In the study of the Word we need the Spirit to shed light. All the beauties of inspiration are in the Word; but we need spiritual light to see them.

Before the tourist on the mountain-top at midnight all the beauties of the landscape are stretched forth ; but he needs the dawning of the morning sun to make them clear and discernible.

You can see what the Spirit does with the Word in the life of Paul. He was a student of the Old Testament, a disciple at the feet of Gamaliel, but he did not recognize Jesus of Nazareth to be a fac-simile of the Old Testament Messiah. The Old Testament was a dark book to him. Such was the state of things before he received the Spirit. Now mark him after he receives the Spirit ! The Book flashes with light. Jesus of Nazareth is the fac-simile of the Old Testament Messiah. With the Old Testament open in his hand, Paul goes through the world preaching Christ.

The Holy Spirit illumines the Book and lets us see Christ in it, Christ in the histories and in the prophecies and in the Gospels and in the Psalms. He does not make a new Word ; he does not add anything to Christ's sayings ; he does not build a new temple of truth ; he enters into the present temple, which is complete, and illumines it from foundation to dome. The illuminating power of the Spirit in relation to the Word explains the different effect which the Word has upon us at different times. Sometimes the grand chapter seems dull ; at other times the grand but old chapter seems new. It gives us new faith, new hope, new love, and new views of God. We are not equally under the power of the Spirit, hence the same chapter moves us differently. Every time we

open God's Book we should look to heaven for the Spirit, that he may control our minds and throw light upon the holy page.

V. THE SPIRIT GLORIFIES CHRIST BY BEAUTIFYING AND PERFECTING THE CHURCH, WHICH IS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

We do not now refer to the work which the Spirit does in the individual saint, whom he polishes as a living stone for the spiritual temple; we refer to the work which the Spirit does in believers as combined in the organism called the church. "Ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Christ now lives on earth through the church, which is Spirit-filled. The Spirit as Christ's representative became incarnate in the church on the day of Pentecost. The book of the Acts shows what He does in and for the church. The advances of the church are dictated by him. He put his seal upon the opening of the door of the Christian Church to the incoming of the Gentiles. He makes known when old positions and customs should be given up. The edict of abandonment reads, "It seems good to us and the Holy Ghost to lay upon you," etc. He chooses the workmen of the church. The Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work," etc. He opens new fields. He sent Paul over to Europe when he would have gone into the heart of Asia. The Spirit is bringing the church to its perfection, and under his work it will some day be glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

DUTIES.

1. *We should see Christ as glorified by the Spirit.*

Why? Because thus seeing Christ means our absorption by Christ. The grander and truer our friends appear to us, the more we live in them, the greater influence they have over us. Thus it is with Christ: the more glorious he appears to us, the more we delight in him and yield ourselves to him.

2. *We should yield ourselves to the Spirit who glorifies Christ.*

The Spirit must do a personal work in us relative to Christ. Can we enjoy the presence of the Spirit and his influence? We can. The Spirit will be given us if we ask for him. It was as Christ prayed at his baptism that he received the Spirit. It was when the disciples on the day of Pentecost prayed that they received the Spirit.

CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

"JESUS LIFTED UP HIS EYES TO HEAVEN."—*John 17:1.*

GREAT events are hastening into history. The last and most thrilling chapter in Christ's wonderful story is being put into type. Jesus looked forward to it from the beginning and often spake of it. He became incarnate for the express purpose of meeting it. He set it forth as the culminating point of his earthly experience. It centred in itself the destinies of man and the grandest exhibit of the glory of God. Realizing that the clock of time was striking, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour is come." When he finished his high-priestly prayer, which he began thus, dark event and dark event struck him as thunder-bolt and thunder-bolt from the storm-cloud strike the tempest-riven mountain-peak. The betrayal, the desertion, the denial, the scourging, and the crucifixion swept upon him in overpowering and rapid succession. This was the hour which called forth his high-priestly prayer.

THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRAYER.

1. *The prayer is a fitting close of Christ's public ministry.*

The English dramatist has said, "All's well that ends well," and there is much truth in Shake-

speare's saying. The end is all-important. It would never do for the life of Elijah to end under the juniper-tree; it must end in the chariot of fire. It would never do for the story of Jesus to end with the sealed tomb; it must end with the ascension amid the hymning angels, and with the enthronement amid the majesty at the right hand of God. It would never do for the words of Jesus, the world's Teacher, to end with the burning maledictions hurled at an oppressing aristocracy; they must end with this prayer of love, which carries in it the golden age of the church and the blessed future of the world.

The ministry of Jesus with its fearless courage, its heavenly revelations, its Godlike promises, and its pure and matchless principles, is something sublimely magnificent. *Can it be properly climaxed?* That is the question which we ask ourselves as we are held spell-bound by his ministry. The intercessory prayer is the answer. It can be climaxed. This address to his Father in heaven, full of shining words of burning love, is the climax. It is the legitimate outgrowth of his ministry, just as the luscious fruit is the outgrowth of the life of the tree. It is full of the same love and faith and zeal. It sums up the purposes of his ministry and reaches after the same gracious ends. It announces the same grand doctrines and sets forth the same duties. It rings out the same note of triumph which the last sermon rings out: "*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*" It voices precisely the same wish which the cross, the culmination of his

ministry, voices. Oh how he must have wished for us, when he could die to bring us into eternal and intimate fellowship with himself!

His address to the Father is one of the grandest of the last grand things in his earthly life. It is fit to stand next to and to companionate with the sacrifice of himself upon the cross, the expression of his infinite love.

2. *The prayer carries with it the appreciation of all the subsequent ages.*

That to which all the ages pay tribute must have merit. That which has refreshed all generations must have worth. The devout worshipper appreciates the songs of the church. Why? Because they have been the spiritual chariots in which the adorations of souls have ridden into the highest heaven. Their wheels have rolled over the pathway between earth and heaven so often that they have cut safe and guiding tracks. Following this same line, we must appreciate this prayer because of what it has done for the past. If you will examine the Bibles used by the fathers who have gone to their reward, you will find that the pages which are thumbed the most are the pages which record this prayer. The tear-marks are here, showing that many a burning thought leaped from the Holy Book and brought the heart of the reader into a tender and a deep response to the heart of the praying Jesus. This prayer of *the Christ* has been a fountain of hope and joy and holy ambition in the Christian Church for nineteen centuries.

his sovereignty, his infinite attributes, are all enthroned in his Fatherhood. If men cannot trust and love the God whom Jesus pictures, I cannot see why. If God is willing to love us as he loves his Son, with whom he has fellowshiped throughout eternity, what more can we ask from God? It is impossible to conceive of anything beyond this that God can give.

It gives us a picture of Christ himself.

Usually the prayers of a man are the best index of what the man is. They reveal his aims and his ideals. They not only show what he is, they show what he would be. All this is true with reference to Christ. We learn of him through his prayers and see him as he sees himself. I am willing to take this prayer as an index of Jesus Christ. I am willing to say to the world, "If you would see Jesus, judge him by this picture."

This picture opens to us his inner life. It shows us his consciousness of preëxistent glory and of co-eternity with the Father. It shows us his hidden purposes and his absolute self-commitment to the work of saving man. He was for ever devoting himself to this gracious mission. As a boy he set himself apart to it. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He reconsecrated himself to it in the agonies of Gethsemane.

As we scrutinize his innermost life which is here brought to view, we find that it was all glorious within. Within there was nothing but holy purposes and pure desires and lofty aims and irre-

versible decrees of self-sacrifice. His life was shot through and through with the glory of God. I know of no Christ grander than the Christ of the intercessory prayer. He is a stimulus and a refreshment and a life-generating model. Let men grasp the Christ of the seventeenth chapter of John and know him and appreciate him as he ought to be known and appreciated, and the world will go into raptures over him and will sing with all its soul that song of praise which is destined to become universal, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

THE PETITIONS OF THE PRAYER.

1. *He asks his Father that he may be glorified.*

His petition for himself is short, but it implies much. He asks the Father to put the stamp of his approbation upon his finished work and to declare his oneness with him. How can the Father do this? By exalting Christ. By sending the angels and inaugurating the ascension. Once the Father glorified Jesus by owning him. He spake down through the skies and said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Jesus wants to be owned again and in a fuller way. He wants to receive that name which is above every name, and to be lifted above principalities and powers and mights and dominion and above every name in the celestial world. He would have the Father invest his voluntary humanity with the eternal glory which he emp-

Bengel, the German, writes, "This chapter is the simplest in language in the Bible, but it is the profoundest in meaning." Melancthon, the friend of Luther, writes, "No voice has been heard either in heaven or on earth more exalted, more holy, more faithful, or more sublime than this prayer offered by the Son of God." He then gives this analysis of it: "Christ prays for himself and then for the whole church. For the church he asks for four things: For the preservation of doctrine, for the appreciation of his sacrifice, for concord, and for the investiture of the church with life and joy and eternal glory." Another of the fathers writes, "It is the climax and consummation of all of Christ's utterances. It presses nearest heaven, and breathes most immediately of its mysteries. It is the Holy of holies in Scripture. It is a specimen of the communication which was kept up between the Father and the Son all through the earthly life of Christ. It speaks of all the profound relationships: the relationship between the Father and the Son, between Christ and the church, and between the church and the world."

3. *The prayer is full of instructive word pictures.*

To the man of an artist mind there is a picture in every verse, and each picture is a profound study. It gives us pictures of the innermost life of Christ, pictures of the Christian's possibilities, pictures of the eternities, past and future; pictures of divine fellowships, earthly and heavenly; pictures of Christian duties and of Christian ideals,

pictures of God's gifts to his people; and pictures of the covenant of grace.

It gives us a picture of the love of God the Father.

Christ exhibits the Father's love towards us in the form of a daring analogy. His words are, "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." God's love for his Son is the measure of his love towards us. What a field there is here for adoring and grateful thought! What is God's love towards Christ? It is a Father's love. We know what an earthly father's love is. We see it in Jacob as he parts with Benjamin. We see it in the broken-hearted David as he laments his dead Absalom. An earthly father's love is such as melts and moves our entire being. But what is the love of an earthly father in comparison with the love of God the divine Father! What is the finite in comparison with the infinite? As well try to give an idea of the vastness of the shore of the ocean by exhibiting a handful of sand; as well try to make men conceive of the grandeur and beauty of the autumnal forests when clad in the robes of sunset splendor by exhibiting a few sprays of burning leaves, as try to represent the love of God the Father by illustrations taken from an earthly father's love. God's love to us is infinite, and he proves it to be infinite by an infinite gift, the gift of his own Son.

What the world needs most is a true conception of God, and this is what Christ most tries to give the world. His picture of God is that of a loving Father. Everything that pertains to God,

tied himself of when he took the form of a servant.

There was great glory in the exaltation of Jesus Christ. How the angels sang when he entered the gates of pearl as the King of glory! His entrance inaugurated new celestial scenes. Heaven never rang with praise as it rang then, and there will never be such another jubilee until Christ enters a second time with his glorified church.

In this petition for himself Christ prays that he may be made known in his true character. His character is his glory. His character is made up of love and purity and self-sacrifice. But men do not know this, hence they misunderstand him and underrate him. Now he asks that he may be known as he is. With Christ to become truly known is to become glorious. He is glorified in the same way that the sun in the sky is glorified. How is the sun glorified? By being allowed to shine in its true strength. Sweep the clouds from the mighty vault and let it shine. Let its glinting shafts shoot throughout the wide world; let them sparkle in the dewdrop and embody themselves in the beautiful flowers and flame in their burning colors. Let Christ have an outcome. Let him as King of nations mould and shape empires and states and rear ideal civil governments righteous in all their functions. Let him re-incarnate himself in men and women who will love as he loved and work as he worked and live as he lived. Let him be reproduced by a consecrated

church which will know nothing among men but the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Let his character be unfolded by the Spirit of God. Let all these things take place, and then Christ will be revealed and glorified in the revelation. We have not yet reached the full revelation of Christ. All the Messianic passages of the Bible have not yet been unlocked. The things of Christ have not all been shown to the saints. Throughout eternity there will be new and fresh exhibits of Christ, and these will call out new and fresh outbursts which will keep heaven always fresh and thrilling.

2. He asks his Father to keep his people separated from the evil in the world.

He wants them kept within the sphere of a holy life. He wants them to be made conscious that their citizenship is in heaven. That there may be no mistake he declares what he does not mean, and then he declares what he does mean. He does not mean that his people shall become anchorites and enter monasteries and nunneries; but he does mean that while they mingle with men they shall be kept from the principles and habits and maxims which sway and shape the lives of the unregenerated. Mixing with people does not necessarily make men worldly. Daniel in Babylon, in the human whirl of the capital of the nation, was unworldly, while Adam in Paradise, with no companion but his wife, became worldly.

Christ's doctrine is this: The world needs the Christian, and the Christian needs the world. The

world needs the Christian, so Christ puts the Christian in the world to be His representative, to reflect His character, and to utter His doctrine. The Christian needs the world, so Christ puts the world around the Christian that it may school and try and discipline him. The Christian is to be in the world but not of the world.

The fact that Christ emphasized unworldliness as a trait of Christian character by praying that his people may be kept unworldly, makes plain the essentiality of this characteristic, and requires us to give it a special study. We will be helped in our study if we ask such questions as these :

What should be the type of our unworldliness ?

It should be such as Christ's. He mingled with men, sailed in their fishing-boats, worked in their shops, joined in their feasts, but in all these scenes he never forgot that he was Christ, and more than this, he never let others forget it. The world always felt that there was a difference between him and it. In our business and pleasures we must never forget that we are Christians, and we must never let others forget it.

Why is unworldliness insisted upon ?

Because there can be no Christian life without it. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils!" "Know ye not that the friendship of this world is enmity with God?" If the cedar and the thistle must grow together on the Lebanon of this world, let them not be married. "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers." The world-

life and the Christ-life are separated in nature, and therefore they should be separated in form. They mean two characters, two works, two destinies, two eternities.

How may we test ourselves and gauge the degree of our unworldliness?

By examining our affinities and preferences and seeing if these seek heavenly things and heavenly people. By scrutinizing our influence. If we are unworldly we shall have spiritual power, and this will tell in bringing others to faith in Christ. Men will believe because of our lives. There are many Lots in the church, who because of their worldly-mindedness make no saving impression upon Sodom. They do not save their own families, to say nothing of saving the community.

How can we promote unworldliness?

By keeping ourselves under the influence of the truth and by consecrated and earnest living. Serve God and there will be no danger from mammon.

3. *He asks his Father that his people may be bound together in unity.*

Christ saw dangers in the coming history of the church, and he threw his prayer between his people and these. He knew that the arch-enemy would seek to weaken the church by divisions, so he warned the church and called it to guard its unity. He tells believers that their unity should be like the unity of the Godhead. The persons of the Godhead are one in love and will and purpose.

How far we are from realizing the ideal of Christ! There is room for improvement in church union. We are not yet up to Christ's standard. Still things are not as bad as some would represent them. It is true that there are some who call themselves Christians who disfellowship those whom Christ fellowships; but these are not the most lovable Christians. They are not to be taken as the best types. They are not the people with whom you would want to fellowship. You would have to be very hard up for fellowship before you would apply at their door. The people who are denied fellowship do not feel the denial. The unloving and exclusive Christians are the losers, and not the disfellowshipped Christians.

I think Christ's prayer has had a large answer. It had its answer in the churches of the apostolic times. It has its answer to-day. The different bodies of Christians are wonderfully united in first principles and in the holding of the doctrines which introduce the soul to Christ as the Saviour. The churches are largely agreed upon the type of life which they shall insist upon and which they call Christian life. Men may attempt to disfellowship one another, but the fact is, Christian fellowship is not at the disposal of human decree. Christian fellowship is at the disposal of the Spirit of God, and only at his disposal. The Holy Ghost is the bond of Christian communion. Men may deny me the signs of fellowship, but if I have the Spirit I have the fellowship without the signs. When men of different nations and different educations

and different endowments and different temperaments are taken hold of and inhabited by the Spirit of God, they are one in the truest sense; they have spiritual and divine things in common, and this is fellowship, and nothing else is.

When God sent the Holy Ghost into the Christian Church on the day of Pentecost, he largely answered this petition of Jesus for Christian unity. We may deny the unity, but that makes no difference; the unity exists. The hand may say that it is not of the body, but that makes no difference. It is of the body nevertheless.

The duty of the Christian Church in all its parts is to manifest to the world the unity which actually exists and which comes from the possession and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the church. It is the duty of Christians to acknowledge one another's Christian standing and to coöperate in putting honor upon Christ. It is their duty to emphasize their agreements. Let us tell the world that we have unity although we have not uniformity. Our oneness is like the oneness of the anthem with its thousands of notes. It was not uniformity that Christ prayed for, because God has not made men uniform. The mission of the Christian Church is to work its unity into visibility.

4. *He asks the Father for eternal and perfect and heavenly fellowship.*

He has prepared mansions for his people, and he will never be satisfied until he comes and receives them to himself.

What this petition for heaven includes we shall

understand only when we reach heaven and see Christ in his glory. The golden age is before us, and when we reach it we shall find it all gold and nothing but gold. It is to be perfect in the display of Christ's glory. It is to be perfect in its separation of souls to God. It is to be perfect in the unity of Christians and in the manifestation of this unity. It is to be perfect in its fellowship with Christ. It will bring us the perfect answer to Christ's intercessory prayer.

Let us learn from this prayer which we have studied—

1. *To give ourselves up to large faith.*

Christ's prayer was offered and recorded on our account. The Father no doubt was delighted by it, but he did not need it. We must not look at the Father and Son as though they were in antagonism. The Father would have been true to his part of the covenant with the Son if Christ had never prayed this prayer. He would also have given his covenant people every promised thing. This prayer is offered on our account. It is intended as a basis upon which we can build our faith. It is intended to give us a vision of our future and the future of our religion as Christ sees it. It lets us see what Christ's will is. If this prayer of Christ is to be our future, great should be our expectation and faith. Small faith dishonors such a future as this.

2. *Let us learn to ask for large and grand things.*

We should ask as Christ asked. He asked for large and grand things. Such things are in the

heart of God for us. We should ask for nothing less than the promises. But what are the promises? Are they a complete exhibition of God's love? Do they exhibit all the favors which he has stored for us? No. We only see parts of God and parts of God's purposes. It is with his love as it is with his power. He takes us out into the universe to look at his mighty works and at the operations of his gigantic forces. When we are amazed and overawed at the sight, he says to us, "If you take this for the full exhibition of my omnipotence you minimize my omnipotence. This is only the hiding of my power." It is with his love as it is with his beauty. In all the beauty in the universe we only see part of the beauty which is in his possession. The rainbow may be taken as the acme of visible beauty. But what is the rainbow? In it we see only half of one of the shining chariot-wheels of Him who rides the storm. The promises are to the full love of God what the twilight is to the noontide splendor. Grand as the promises are and high above our faith as they are, they are only the flush of the dawn of God's infinite affection. For the noonday of this affection we must await the heavenly revelations. If this be so, then when we draw upon God's love we should draw largely. When we pray we should be like Christ, and ask for large and grand things.

CHRIST BETRAYED BY JUDAS.

"JUDAS WHO BETRAYED HIM."—*John 18:2.*

IF we are to have this Scripture before us in its fulness, we must first look at Jesus before we give our thoughts to Judas. The intention of the Scripture is *first* to glorify Christ, and then *secondly* to instruct us. It is true that Judas serves as a revelation of humanity, and makes manifest the things in our nature which we must guard against and eliminate; it is true that we intend especially to use them as such; but it is also true that he serves to make John's exhibit of Jesus Christ more clear and more perfect, and we must deal with that fact first.

In our previous study we ascertained the reigning purpose of the Gospel according to John. It is this: To set forth and establish the deity of Christ. Up to this point in his writings John has set forth divine attribute after divine attribute, and in these we have seen the outshining of God in Christ. In Jesus Christ we have seen ubiquity of power, infinite condescension, and the exercise of omnipotence. This Scripture brings one more of his divine attributes into prominence, viz., the divine attribute of infinite and unchanging love. Infinite and unchanging love is certainly an attribute of God. The love of God the Father, the God of the Old Testament, is infinite and unchanging. Only

such a love would have held on to backsliding and sinning Israel. Behold his infinite and unchanging love. He sent them his prophets, and they stoned his prophets. Then he sent them his Son, and they crucified his Son. Then he sent them his Spirit. When their sin abounded, his grace did much more abound. The love of God the Father is an infinite and unchanging love. Now this love of God the Father is matched by the love of Jesus Christ, and this Scripture tells us so. Treason and desertion and denial could not overcome it. Treason and desertion and denial were the things which the disciples gave Jesus, but he loved them unchangingly. He showed his love by his tender warnings, and by his tireless efforts to rescue them from coming sins and from the bitter consequents thereof. His love wrestled to melt the hard heart of Judas and to prevent his treason. When one expedient failed, it tried another. The love which wrestled with and held on to Judas was the same love which wrestled with and held on to sinning Israel.

JUDAS, WHO BETRAYED CHRIST.

When we read the story of Judas' treason we cannot forget who Judas was. Judas was an apostle. This man who sold Christ once labored for Christ. He was among the twelve whom Christ ordained, and whom he sent forth to work miracles and preach the kingdom of heaven. He both preached and wrought miracles. He shared with the others in gifts and in commission. Does God

then employ unconverted men to carry on his work? That is a natural question, and we must deal with it. In answering it we reply, Not as a rule. Judas stands as an exception among the apostles, just as Balaam stands as an exception among the prophets. As a rule heaven blesses only the ministry of regenerated men; it employs good men to make bad men good. This is the rule, but it has had its rare exceptions. Somewhere we have read of sailors in the Arctic regions who, to warm their freezing blood, kindled a fire by pieces of ice taken from the crystal mountains of frozen waters piled about them. By forming the ice into a concave lens it caught and condensed the rays of the sun, acting as a burning-glass. The ice-lens remained itself unmelted, while by its aid the sailors kindled a fire in the wild wilderness of snow. Even so the rays of gospel truth may pass through the frozen heart of an unconverted worker, thaw the souls of those to whom he ministers into the temperature of heavenly love, and yet leave him frosty and icebound. This may be; but when it is the case, it is the exception and not the rule. God can use any agency in his service. He can use the crowing of a cock; he can use the lips of an ass; he can even use the devil, and he does. The devil sticks a thorn into Paul's flesh, and he does it out of pure devilishness, but God makes it a means of grace to Paul, and by it keeps him from a spiritual pride which would ruin him.

When we read the story of Judas' treason, we cannot forget that Christ himself chose Judas to

the apostolate. That suggests another question, viz., Was Christ deceived in Judas, or did he make a mistake in choosing him? Christ made no mistake in selecting this man; Judas had his place and his work. The function of Judas, as one of the twelve, was in point of usefulness inferior to none. Though he served Christianity unintentionally, his service was of immense importance. He proved to be a most effective and telling witness for Christ. He was admitted into the inner life of Christ. He had opportunities to see Christ and know him through and through. When he was in his agony of remorse because of his treason, and when he searched the life of Christ to find a flaw in it which would justify his treason and satisfy his accusing conscience, he was compelled to cry out, "I have betrayed innocent blood; I have sinned against holiness!" Men who refuse to believe the testimony of the other apostles are compelled to believe Judas. Think of it; so thoroughly convinced was Judas of the truth of his testimony to Christ that he was compelled to seal it with his blood. No; there was no mistake in the choice of Judas to be a witness of Jesus Christ. As a witness he was worth as much as any other two. He was the most impartial of all the witnesses. To testify for Christ was self-crimination; it was branding himself as a traitor and blackening his name for eternity. Still, under the compulsion of his conscience, he cast down the thirty pieces of silver at the feet of the men who purchased Christ at his hand for that sum, and look-

ing them full in the face he said, "I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood." In estimating the character of Jesus Christ, men will never cease to count that testimony.

But let us look at the treason of Judas fairly and squarely. It was a monumental crime, and it was such because it was an awfully aggravated crime. Judas deliberately broke down every barrier which Jesus erected to keep him from his fatality. It was not the Lord who rejected Judas, it was Judas who rejected the Lord. The details of his treason, which show the capacity of human nature for sin, show also the pleading love and outgoing pity of Christ, and his unwillingness to give up the sinner. Let us enumerate the aggravations in the treason of the man.

He committed his treason upon the most solemn occasion. He was amid holy scenes. The time was charged with solemnity. He was dealing with a seal of the covenant, the Passover. He was handling the memorials of God's avenging plagues wherewith He smote Egypt, and yet there was in his heart a greater crime than Egypt ever committed. There is something in the occasion upon which a sin is committed. A man who can deliberately sin amid the sanctity of the Sabbath, or in the presence of death, gives evidence of intense hardness of heart. The solemnity of the occasion in which Judas sinned was as the sanctity of the Sabbath and as the presence of death.

He committed his treason when the warning of Christ was ringing in his ears. Jesus told him

of his danger. Jesus named his sin and described it. He gave it its right name that he might startle the traitor and thus save him: "One of you shall betray me." Soft and polite names applied to sins make them easy of commission. Call equivocation downright lying, which it is; call sly insinuation black slander, which it is; call business sharpness real dishonesty, which it is; and there will be fewer equivocaters, fewer insinuators, and fewer sharp business men. The warning which Christ gave the traitor was full of power, because it named his crime boldly and clearly. It is an aggravation when a man knowingly and determinately commits a sin which bears an odious name.

He committed his treason when his companions were manifesting their sorrow and horror at his crime. Christ brought to bear upon Judas the full influence of the apostles. Here were eleven men whose good-will and esteem bound him to fidelity, yet he brake this eleven-fold bond. Is the sorrow of friends nothing? Is it nothing that your home is heart-broken by your waywardness? Is it nothing that the church grieves over you as a prodigal? There is a power in human sorrow. The sad countenance is a mighty force, and Christ did well to surround the traitor with eleven sad faces, in order if possible to hold him from ruin. "They were exceeding sorrowful and began every one of them to say, Lord, is it I?" By their sorrow these disciples manifested their horror at the treason of Iscariot. The question, "Lord, is it I?"

was a question of horror. It showed what the apostles thought of the treason. By this question public sentiment was brought to bear upon Judas. The horror of these disciples was natural, for treason has ever been odious. Read the story of Benedict Arnold, and mark the thrill of indignation that swept through the republic when his treason was unmasked. Read the story of the assassination of Julius Cæsar, and learn that it was the sting of treason that paralyzed his arm. He fought his assassins until his eye rested upon his friend Brutus. When he saw the hand of Brutus uplifted to strike the deadly blow, his spirit failed him and he fell without a further struggle. That treason roused the Roman Empire. Brutus was compelled to flee from public indignation and die, like Judas, the death of a suicide. It is a hardened heart that can sin against public sentiment.

Judas sinned with hypocritical effrontery, conscious that he was detected, and with a full knowledge of the judgment which hung over him. Usually detection breaks the sinner down. It made Judas more brazen-faced. Instead of allowing himself to be looked out of countenance, he determined to look everybody else out of countenance. As though he were innocent he too asked, "Lord, is it I?" He asked this question after Jesus showed him the dark millenniums of perdition which hung over him. What a sight have we here! The hardening of the sinful heart under the pleadings of mercy; the sinner past impression, self-blinded and infatuated, all his

feelings turned into stone. What a sight! The Son of God himself unsuccessful as a preacher. But mark, the pleading of mercy is not without its effects. It is never in vain. The doom of Judas shows this. It melts or it hardens. It is like the sun, which either scatters the mists of the summer morning or else rolls them into heavier folds, from whose livid depths the storm flashes at mid-day.

The doom of Judas with its remorse, its scream of agony, "I have betrayed innocent blood!" its abandonment of the price of blood as though each piece of silver were a red-hot coin, its awful leap out into a black and rayless eternity—the doom of Judas is a convincing proof that treason does not pay. It does not pay. The whole world is down on it, and so is God and so is the traitor's own conscience. There is no possibility of exaggerating the doom of Judas the traitor, for the Bible nowhere teaches us that the love of God is lower than hell, or that there is a probation for man after he leaps as a suicide into eternity. It is only a morbid charity that exaggerates God's mercy at the expense of his justice. Such a charity helps not one whit the souls on the other side of the line, but it deceives and destroys souls on this side of the line. It is not charity at all; it is downright falsehood and cruelty.

The doom of Judas is a tough problem upon the hands of theologians who deal in this false charity. One of them in our city gave a course of lectures on the twelve apostles. When he

reached Judas, I went to hear that lecture. I was curious to witness the ascension of Judas to the skies. The lecturer put him there. He built a magnificent heavenly palace for him out of rhetoric and imagination. No mansion could be grander than his. He made it out that because Judas was the greatest sinner, therefore his salvation would be the grandest possible exhibit of the glorious grace of God. Then he dwelt upon the repentance and confession of Judas, and declared that any kind of sorrow on account of sin meant eternal life. Rhetorically considered it was a beautiful heavenly mansion. But when he finished it and it stood forth in its grandeur and completeness, I saw two bolts from God's Word strike it, and they struck it full and fair on its base. These bolts were hurled by the hand of divine truth. When the great cloud of smoke and dust had passed away and the flying *debris* had settled and the atmosphere had become clear, I looked, and there was not one stone of the mansion left upon another. One of the bolts which struck the fabric was this: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." The other bolt was this: "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." Of no soul that ever reached heaven and enjoyed eternal glory can it be said, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

DEDUCTIONS.

1. God puts all possible barriers in the way of sinners.

What more could Christ have done to keep Judas from treason? In Christ's dealing with him we see God's dealing with all sinners. You remember God's protest to Balaam. You remember the plagues which God put between Pharaoh and his ruin. God is dealing with us as he dealt with these men of old. He is warning us. He is daily putting barriers between us and sin with its sure doom. Judas is a barrier. The known career of every sinner is a barrier. The commandments, the threatenings, the warnings, the promises, the judgments, the broken hearts of friends, and the admonitions of conscience, all these are barriers which God uses to block the way to sin and ruin. If we ride over these barriers, then we are responsible for the consequences.

2. The dark possibilities of human nature are tremendous.

Judas reveals this. We are not to suppose that the betrayal has never been repeated. Christ is betrayed every day. There is a slumbering Judas in every heart. There is in us all the moral stuff out of which to make traitors and deserters. Our timid treasons will grow into daring betrayals if not eliminated, and our thoughtless boastings will rebound into desertions if not checked. This is what the record of dark appalling providences teaches us. A voice from this sad chapter says,

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

It is folly to talk of the conduct of Judas as though it were outside of the pale of humanity. Given the same circumstances, and human nature can produce a like treason at any time. The controlling habits and volitions of Judas are found in ten thousands of hearts. The deed of Judas is simply a window showing the human heart. In him we see our dark possibilities. These are shown us to teach that it takes the almighty grace of God to restrain us, and the almighty Spirit to regenerate us and give us a new heart, and the almighty truth to sanctify our nature.

But is there not a bright fact associated with this line of thought? There is. It is this: If we have such a tremendous power for evil, our nature must have a tremendous power for good. The garden that grows weeds can grow flowers. When our faculties are sanctified, when the whole bent of our immortal nature is turned heavenward and Godward, our possibilities to rise and advance are as tremendous as our possibilities to retrograde and demonize. Are Judas and Peter in their betrayal and denial of Christ types of humanity? so are Moses and Elijah, who appear in glory and who strengthen and comfort Christ.

3. *The wickedness of man, great as it is, is subservient to the divine purpose.*

We may not be able to explain this, but we see it to be so. It is history. We may find a diffi-

culty in the apparent clash between the decree of God and the free agency of man and we may feel ourselves in a mix, but the difficulty is one wholly of metaphysics and not of facts. The awakened conscience finds no difficulty. Judas did not throw himself back on the divine decree, although his treason was the fulfilment of a decree; he threw himself back on his free agency. He accused himself and not God. That is what every awakened sinner does. Over every sin there is an overruling decree, which conscience declares does not destroy man's responsibility, but which history declares does make man's sin subservient to God's glorious plans for the universe. Treason and denial and desertion in the school of the apostles, one-sixth of the whole number in disgrace, the rest fleeing from duty, what state of the church could be worse than that? And yet the church lived and reached Pentecost. God makes a record of this so that we may never give way to discouragement or distrust. Distrust is about as bad as desertion. This is the law of the kingdom of God, viz., The treason leads to the crucifixion, the crucifixion leads to the resurrection, the resurrection leads to the ascension, the ascension leads to the coronation, the coronation leads to the universal triumph. Nothing can stop the onward cause of God or the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.

"THEN DELIVERED HE HIM THEREFORE UNTO THEM TO BE CRUCIFIED."—*John 19:16.*

PILATE is a man with a dark immortality. His name is a by-word and a hissing in human history. He is known to the after ages only because of his wickedness. God's Word gives him a place in gospel history that he may be a beacon to society and an exposition of the dark side of human nature. He is an illustration of the downward tendencies of man and an exponent of his dark possibilities. It is the possibility of man in every age to scourge Jesus Christ the Son of God and crucify him.

I. THE HISTORY OF PILATE AS HE JUDGES JESUS.

The rulers of the Jews had already condemned Jesus to death, and they brought him to Pilate to have their sentence confirmed and executed. The reason they appealed to Pilate was this: The Romans had taken away from them the right of inflicting capital punishment. As things were, only the Roman Government could lawfully put a man to death. The Roman method of inflicting capital punishment was crucifixion. The Jews therefore brought Jesus to Pilate to be crucified. In choosing the Roman method of inflicting capital punishment rather than the Jewish method, they were

employing means which fulfilled a noted prediction concerning Christ. The Jewish method was to stone a man to death. Stoning mangled the body and broke the bones of the victim. God had proclaimed in prophecy that when Christ should be offered as the great Passover sacrifice which taketh away the sin of the world, not a bone of his body should be broken. If he had been stoned to death, this purpose of God's would have failed ; but when Christ was crucified it was literally carried out.

The first question which Pilate asked the rulers of the Jews was, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" Was it the tone in which Pilate asked this question that offended the Jewish rulers? We know not ; but it is certain they were offended. They considered the question a compliment to Jesus and a reflection upon them. "They answered and said, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Supposing him guilty of a minor offence, Pilate told these rulers to take Christ and judge him according to their own laws. To this the rulers replied, "The charge against him is a capital charge, requiring the infliction of the death penalty ; we have found him guilty and we bring him to you for execution." Pilate, seeing that the case was upon his hands, demanded that formal charges be presented against Christ. These the rulers presented. He was charged with forbidding men to pay tribute to Cæsar and with claiming to be king himself. When the charges were made, Pi-

late took Christ into an inner room and held his first conversation with him. He asked him if he was a king. Jesus in turn requested an explanation of the question: "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" That is, Do you ask your question in the Romish sense or in the Jewish sense? Do you ask am I a political king, a rival of Cæsar, or am I the Jewish Messiah-king? Pilate threw himself on his dignity and asked, "Am I a Jew?" This showed that Pilate's question was a political question, and Jesus immediately explained to Pilate the character of his kingdom and the sense in which he was king.

Thus the trial of Jesus, which was prosecuted with bitterness, serves the church of Christ for all time. It calls forth from the Master himself an exposition of his kingdom, and a declaration of the instrumentalities by which it is to be furthered. This is just what the church needs. And what is the kingdom of Christ according to the highest authority? First we learn what it is not, and then we learn what it is. It is not a kingdom full of worldly pomp and display. It is not a kingdom seeking worldly ends. It is not a kingdom which gets its authority from earth, from the human will, but from heaven. It is not a kingdom guarded with bayonets and guns and flashing swords. It is a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of truth, a kingdom of ideas, a kingdom set up in the souls of men. It is a kingdom whose warfare is carried on with spiritual weapons. These wea-

pons are holy thoughts, and they are powerful. The omnipotent God is in them. It is because these weapons are so powerful that the kingdom of Christ is destined to become universal. Thoughts are mightier than swords. They will bring down hearts which are out of the reach of bullets. They will explode systems which dynamite cannot budge. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual; yet they are mighty through God for the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan."

Pilate's talk with Christ convinced him that Christ was not guilty of the charge which the Jews brought against him. He saw that his offence was not political, but religious, and that it was envy which led the rulers of the Jews to seek his crucifixion. He immediately took Christ out to his accusers and told them that he found no fault in him.

If this had ended the case, Pilate would have stood before the world as a noble character and as an honest man. But it did not end the case. Pilate refused to stand by his decision and make it final. He listened to the protests and appeals of the angry Jews. He allowed them to reopen the case and to rejudge an acquitted man. He showed irresolution, and this was his fatal hurt. Finding the case again on his hands, he determined to dispose of it by expedients and not by square and open justice. In the second charges made against Christ, one of the counts was that he created trouble in Galilee. Pilate thought that

this opened the door of escape to him, for it gave him an opportunity to transfer the whole case to Herod, the governor of Galilee. The case was so transferred, and Pilate congratulated himself on his clever deliverance. But Herod could make nothing of the case and sent it back to Pilate. Again Pilate sought the release of Christ by telling his accusers that his decision as to Christ's innocence had been confirmed by Herod. But this was not accepted by the accusers of Christ. Pilate then resorted to another expedient. He determined to appeal to the people and have them annul the sentence of their rulers. He could not prevail with the rulers; perhaps he might prevail with the people. It was customary to release at the feast a prisoner whom the people chose. Pilate therefore put Barabbas, a noted criminal, and Jesus side by side, and asked the people, Whom shall I release, Barabbas or Jesus? The difference between the men was so great that Pilate felt that the people would be compelled to choose Jesus and thus settle the case. To Pilate's surprise and mortification the air was filled with the cry oftentimes repeated, "Release Barabbas and crucify for us Jesus."

The further efforts of Pilate to save Jesus are easily told. Seeing that the case was desperate and that the people had doomed Jesus to the cross, Pilate proposed this severe measure, "I will scourge Christ and let him go." He thought that this would satisfy the people and deliver Jesus from crucifixion. This proposal was downright

cruelty, and we begin to see the true inwardness of the man who could propose it. What was this proposal? It was a proposal to treat a guiltless man as though he were the worst of criminals. Only the most guilty were scourged. It was a proposal to lacerate and inflict the severest agony upon a pure and holy body. Scourging was a most cruel thing. We are told that the victim under the scourge often fell to the floor amid screams and convulsive leaps and awful contortions, and then swooned and lay there a senseless heap, an unrecognizable mass of bleeding flesh. Sometimes they were picked up dead. This was the treatment which Pilate proposed for Jesus. "I will scourge him and let him go." Only the most pitiful mockery of a ruler or judge dare propose such a thing for the man whom he pronounced innocent. It was as really wrong to scourge Christ as it was to crucify him. Let Pilate yield so far as to scourge Christ, and the accusers of Christ will discern at once his fickleness and his loose views of justice; they will see the possibility of compelling him to crucify Christ. Man cannot escape sin by sinning. Man cannot succeed by putting policy in the place of principle. Pilate did not succeed. When he scourged Jesus, Pilate's soldiers, catching his spirit, subjected Jesus to further injustice and cruelty. They maltreated him and mocked him. They drove a crown of thorns upon his head and clothed him in a sham robe of royalty. Thus Pilate's cruelty begat greater cruelty. When Pilate brought him out thus robed and

crowned, covered with blood and shame, this pitiable sight, instead of melting the crowd, only infuriated it and started anew the cry, "Crucify him, crucify him!" It called forth a fresh charge. This last charge the rulers had kept in the background. The charge was this: "He claims to be the Son of God. This is blasphemy, and according to our law he is worthy of death."

This last charge led Pilate to lead Jesus back into the palace for another interview, for Pilate was filled with a superstitious fear. He questioned Jesus as to his deity, but Jesus answered him not a word about his deity. This threw Pilate into displeasure and led him to put on his dignity again and talk of his power to release or crucify. Then it was that Christ set before him his responsibility as a civil ruler to higher power, and in love set before him his great guilt.

The whole scene closes at this point. Coming out from this interview, Pilate once more proclaimed Christ's innocence and offered to release him. By this time the accusers of Jesus had become desperate. They had one more shaft to hurl at Pilate, and they hurled it. It was the fatal shaft. It was a disgrace for the Jews to hurl it, but it conquered Pilate. They claimed Cæsar as their king and threatened Pilate with an appeal to him. "We have no king but Cæsar. If thou lettest this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend, and we will bring accusation against thee before Cæsar. Either condemn Christ or lose thy throne." History tells us that on a prior occasion the Jews lodged accusa-

tions against Pilate before Cæsar because of cruelty, and that he only had a hair-breadth escape. This made him fearful now and gave terror and force to the threat which the Jews used. To be Cæsar's friend was Pilate's supreme consideration, and, as he thought, his highest worldly interest. What was the life of this accused man to his throne? Pilate's past bad life was against him and bound him to do wrong now. It gave bad men a lever with which to ply him. With a chargeable past, he dared not provoke the nation now. He had no stock of good opinion upon which to draw. Many a man's past hinders him from doing what he knows to be right and what he wants to do. Men point the finger of remembrance at his sullied name, or they ask with withering scorn, Dost thou reprove us? or they threateningly enjoin silence. By doing what is wrong now we are making it hard to do right in the days to come.

Under a fear of losing his throne Pilate uttered the unjust sentence against Christ and delivered him to be crucified. It is true he washed his hands and threw the responsibility upon the Jews; it is true that he declared his innocency of the blood of this just man; but it is just as true that the blood of Jesus could not have been shed if he had said, "No." It was his sentence that delivered Christ to the cross. It was his soldiers who drove the crucial nails through the hands and feet of Christ, and he gave the orders to his soldiers. The washing of his hands was a mere play and a humbug—a cheat foisted upon his conscience.

But what would you have Pilate do? What would I have Pilate do? I would have him give up his doublings and twistings and schemings and trimming and crooked ways. I would have him stop his unseemly whiffling and parleying and dallying. I would have him substitute principle for expediency. I would have him do the one thing which he refuses to do. I would have him do his simple duty and manfully assume the responsibility which the hour and the place and the office lay upon him. Instead of issuing the order to his soldiers that they should scourge and crucify Christ, I would have him issue this order: "Soldiers of Rome, draw your sabres and form in solid phalanx around this just man and magnify the law by saving his life. Let justice be done though the heavens should fall." God opened before Pilate a grand opportunity. He might have taken his stand with Paul and Stephen and John. He might have been a hero in Christian history and a crowned head away up in the shining ranks of heaven. He might have been Christ's friend instead of Cæsar's friend. As it was he sinned against light, he sinned against conscience, he sinned against society, he sinned against an innocent man, and he reaped the dark consequences of his sin.

II. DEDUCTIONS.

1. *Christ is on trial to-day, and we must give our decision upon him.*

History is constantly repeating itself. In every

age the question is asked, What shall be done with Christ? Shall he be crowned or crucified? Shall he be consigned to oblivion, or shall he be reproduced and reincarnated? The old and exciting scenes of Jerusalem are constantly being acted over again. Christ is the standing problem. Morally we are identified with the men of his day who dealt with him face to face. We are Pilates and Judases, or Johns and Peters. Like them we have to ponder the question, Who is Christ? We are catalogued with these men of nineteen centuries ago according as we are for or against Christ. If we surrender Christ into unfriendly hands, we are catalogued with Pilate. If we have not the courage to go against our self-interest that the right may prevail, we are catalogued with Pilate. If we allow the enemies of Christ to do our thinking and mark our line of action, we are catalogued with Pilate. If we do not give an early and an out-and-out decision for Christ, we are catalogued with Pilate. An out-and-out decision for Christ is our only safety. Christ is arraigned and accused to-day by the Sanhedrin of passion and interest and sophistry; Christ is brought to-day before the Pilate of reason and conscience; Christ is being nailed to-day to the cross of criticism; the question with us is, Are we befriending him?

Men do not always realize that they are dealing with Christ and deciding upon him and his claims. This fact is strikingly brought out by Christ himself in the picture which he gives of the judgment scene in the closing verses of the twenty-fifth

chapter of Matthew. His enemies did not know that they were dealing with him. They were surprised that they were charged with slighting him. Their answer to the charge was, "We never saw thee hungry and thirsty, that we should neglect thee or deny thee." Christ told them that they saw and dealt with him when they saw and dealt with the poor and needy. His friends also saw him and served him, and did not know that they saw him or served him. We meet Christ, and deal with and decide upon him, all the time. He is in every good cause which seeks the promotion of his glory. He is in every case of needed charity. He is in every gospel sermon. He is in every true believer who lives in union with him. He is in every right principle. In dealing with all these we are dealing with Christ and judging Christ. We deal with him in times of special conviction and decide for or against him. We deal with him on every communion season; and we decide for him when we honor him in the Supper, but we decide against him when we refuse to honor him in the Supper. To join the sacramental hosts of God's elect is to cry, "Hosanna!" To stand aloof from this host of God is to identify ourselves with the crowd which cry, "Crucify!" No man living in a gospel land can escape giving some decision upon Jesus Christ.

2. *God holds us individually responsible for our decisions with regard to Christ.*

This is most clearly set forth in the case of Pilate. He washed his hands and said, "I am in-

nocent." But no handwashing could wash guilt from his soul. He thought that he had shifted the responsibility of his deed upon the shoulders of the accusing Jews, but such a thing God will not allow. The first act proven in human history was this: Every one is personally responsible. Adam tried to throw the responsibility of sin upon Eve; Eve tried to throw it upon the devil. But God said, "You are all guilty." He judged them all and pronounced sentence upon all. The very first doctrine which God thundered in the ears of the human race was the doctrine of individual responsibility. The very first sentence which God pronounced upon man was a sentence because he did not think for himself and act for himself. The first man was sentenced because he did not say "No." He should have said "No" to his wife and "No" to the devil. "No" is one of the most important words in our dealing with our fellow-men. It is a word necessary to our independence. It is a greater safeguard than a whole army. It is the protection of our responsibility. Pilate should have said "No" to the men who cried, "Crucify him!" But he did not. He excused himself to his own conscience, and to God, by pleading that he was a tool and compelled by the force of circumstances to carry out the dictation of others. But such a plea avails nothing with God. We have no right to be a tool. We have no right to surrender our judgment to another. We have no right to allow others to do our thinking, and this is the meaning of individual responsibility. Though all

men should condemn Christ, we should stand up for him. Let us to-day, in the presence of Pilate's ineffectual attempt to evade his responsibility, take a fresh grip upon the fact that God will judge us personally and hold us individually accountable. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. "The most solemn thought of all thoughts," said the greatest statesman of America, "is the thought of my personal responsibility."

3. *We cannot decide for Christ and the right without being subjected to trying opposition.*

Loyalty to God has always meant a clash with the world, and loss according to the world's estimation. It means the furnace of fire and the den of lions. It means the beheadment of James and the martyrdom of Stephen and the execution of Paul. While this is so, still the men who adhere to God and the right escape worse things than those which they meet. There are worse things than fiery furnaces and lions' dens and martyrdom. There is the loss of character and the wreck of manhood and the wrath of Almighty God and the contempt of public opinion. Yes, the contempt of public opinion. For after all, the great public abhor trimmers and time-servers. Pilate is unpopular. Just so surely as Christ must go up, Pilate must go down. While truth shall win in the end, in the meantime no man can be a loyal friend of the truth until he is prepared to pay, and willing to pay, the price of such friendship.

4. *There is a doom awaiting all who treat Christ unjustly.*

There is a hereafter with Christ. Christ is now before us for judgment, but the day is coming when we shall be before him for judgment. How Pilate must have felt when word was brought him that Jesus had risen from the dead! Christ's resurrection made the judgment bar of God a fearful reality to his mind.

But there is a doom for the ungodly now as well as hereafter. If "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is," ungodliness must be unprofitable in all things, and must be without the promise of the life that now is. No man can betray Christ without betraying himself; no man can crucify Christ without crucifying himself. Part of the doom of wrong-doing is the loss of the very things after which we reach through wrong-doing. Pilate lost everything he sought. He lost the friendship and favor of Cæsar. The success of the wicked is only apparent, but not real. It has only a momentary endurance. This is so according to the appointment of God. This is so because the doom of injustice is non-success. No unjust thing can stand. No man can make a permanent triumph of an unjust cause. Thomas Carlyle has left the world ringing words upon this point: "I tell thee, there is nothing else but justice. One strong thing I find below, and that is the just thing, the true thing. My friend, if thou hadst all the artillery of Woolwich marching at thy back in support of an unjust thing, and infi-

nite bonfires visibly awaiting ahead of thee to blaze centuries to come for thy victory on behalf of it, I would advise thee to call, 'Halt!' to fling down thy *baton*, and say, 'In God's name, no!' What will thy success amount to? If the thing is unjust, thou hast not succeeded, though bonfires blazed from north to south, and bells rang, and editors wrote leading articles, and the just thing lay trampled out of sight to all mortal eyes, an abolished and an annihilated thing."

Keeping out of sight the eternity beyond, look at the earthly career of these men who had to do with the crucifixion of Jesus! See what overtook those whose hands were stained with his blood! Judas failed in his career. He could not hold in his hands the coveted thirty pieces of silver. They were red-hot with divine wrath. His sin made life unendurable to him, and unbidden of God he plunged into eternity. Pilate's career was no better. He lost his throne, was exiled in disgrace from Rome, and died a miserable suicide. The career of the Jews was no better. Divine retribution in their case was most remarkable. "They cried, 'We have no king but Cæsar,' and they had no king but Cæsar. Cæsar after Cæsar outraged and pillaged them, till at last their Cæsar slaked in the blood of its last defenders the red ashes of their desecrated temple. They forced the Romans to crucify their Christ, and within forty years after that they themselves were crucified in myriads outside the walls of Jerusalem by the very same Romans. They accepted the guilt of Christ's

blood, and the last pages of their history were glued together with that crimson stain." Verily there is a doom awaiting all who treat Christ unjustly. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

"AND HE, BEARING HIS CROSS, WENT FORTH."—*John 19:17.*

THREE historical facts and three practical deductions will sum up our study of the story of the cross.

THE FACTS.

1. *Jesus voluntarily submitted to be nailed to the cross.*

He was not dragged to Calvary. His going was the voluntary act of his will. This the narrative takes special pains to set forth. It is written, "And He, bearing His cross, went forth." But was not this willingness upon the part of Jesus simply prudence? Was it not to save himself from being roughly handled? What could he single-handed do? He was in the grasp of the Roman army and at the mercy of a pitiless mob. Was it not the dictation of mere prudence that led him to go willingly? No. It was something deeper and higher and nobler than prudence. It was the volition of love. It was the eternal purpose of the covenant. The only power in the universe that could take Jesus to the cross was the power of his own love whereby he sacrificed himself for our sins. The mob of Nazareth tried to kill him before his time, but it was not able. The soldiers who were sent to arrest him were struck to the ground by the omnipotence which played

in the look of his eye. If he had not gone with them of his own option they could have made no arrest. What was a Roman army or a Jewish mob to Him whose word could shrivel a living tree into a dead thing, whose hands held the forces of nature, and whose will commanded the legions of angels? Jesus Christ meant to die. He came into the world to die, for this was the only way by which he could save sinners. The very first fact in the opening of the story of the crucifixion is this: Jesus Christ went to the cross of his own free will. This fact exalts the crucifixion. It makes it something more than the mere act of man inspired by cruel hate; it makes it the great purpose of God. It makes it the act of Christ's matchless love.

If we would see to what Christ devoted himself when he went to the cross, we must recall the horrors of crucifixion. A picture of death by crucifixion is, in horror, something like the picture of dying from leprosy. To spare myself the torture of working out a description, I have selected this description wrought out by Canon Farrar: "Utterly brutal and revolting was the punishment by crucifixion. The condemned man was first disrobed. Then came the awful moment. He was laid upon the instrument. His hands were stretched along the cross-beams and at the centre of the open palms the point of a huge iron nail was placed, and the nail was driven through the hands into the wood by the blows of a mallet.

"Then through his feet another huge nail tore

its way through the quivering flesh. To prevent the hands and feet from being torn away by the weight of the body, which could not rest upon nothing but four great wounds, there was placed about the centre of the cross a wooden projection strong enough to support the body, which soon became a weight of agony. The accursed tree with its living burden in helpless agony was slowly heaved up by strong arms, and the end firmly fixed in a hole dug for that purpose. The feet of the sufferer were but a little raised from the ground, so that the victim was within full reach of every hand that chose to strike and in close proximity to every gesture of insult and hatred. A death by crucifixion includes all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly: dizziness, spasms, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, fever, horror of anticipation, mortification of undressed wounds. All these are intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured, but they stop just short of the point which would give the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position of the body makes every movement painful. The lacerated veins and crushed tendons throb with incessant anguish. The arteries become swollen and oppressed. The wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrene. Added to all these is the pang of burning and raging thirst."

It was to a death reached through such agony that Jesus gave himself when he submitted to be nailed to the cross.

2. *Jesus, while he hung upon the cross, gave utterance to memorable sayings.*

His biographers tell us that some of the sayings were uttered in order to fulfil the Old Testament predictions concerning the Messiah. It is wonderful how minute God was in taking precautions against imposture. He outlined the coming Christ. Hundreds of years prior to his advent he told how he should be born and what he should do and say. He also marked out for him a line of suffering which no impostor could have the courage to meet. Impostors are not fond of being pierced with thorns, of having their bodies cut up with a scourge, of being nailed to the cross. God guarded the Messiahship by building around it an unscalable mountain of agony and suffering. The true Christ must be a suffering Christ. He must utter the awful cry of abandonment. He must close his life amid the agonies of crucifixion and at the same time he must utter the calm words of faith, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." This made imposture an absolute impossibility. Jesus of Nazareth filled up the Old Testament outline. He even met those awful sufferings predicted of the Messiah and uttered those awful cries of agony which were foretold. The sayings, therefore, of Jesus on the cross are valuable in that as fulfilments of prophecy they help in the establishment of his Messiahship.

But this is not the full value of the sayings of Jesus upon the cross. They have a much wider out-reach. Each saying opens a door into a wide

field of thought and revelation. These sayings are like the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. They are like the petitions in the Lord's Prayer. They are like the commandments in the Decalogue. They are seven in all. It would be possible to take them and out of the material in them build up a magnificent system of truth for belief and a magnificent system of law for practice.

The first saying is the prayer which he offered for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The second saying is his reply to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The third saying is his address to his mother and to John, "Woman, behold thy son! [Son], behold thy mother!"

The fourth saying is that mysterious cry of desertion, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" This cry opens a door into a field of profound thought and fact. It introduces us to the very soul of the doctrine of the atonement. It tells us that Christ's death had a God-ward bearing, and was necessary to satisfy divine righteousness. It is a companion cry to the cry of Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." It must be linked with such words as these: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him;" "He hath put him to grief;" "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin," etc. It tells us that Christ's death has a manward bearing, and that it was borne in man's room and stead. It

must be linked with such words as these: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities;" He himself "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." He had no sins of his own to separate between him and God: it must therefore have been the sins of others that caused the separation spoken of in the cry. This cry teaches that on the cross he was the sinners' substitute. There is no other theory that can explain the divine desertion; but this theory can and does explain it. If God can desert a sinner, and he does, then it follows that when Christ takes the law-place of the sinner and stands in the sinner's room, God can desert Christ. The substitute can be treated as the principal.

The fifth saying is the cry, "I thirst!"

The sixth saying is the cry, "It is finished!" This is the one glad cry of Jesus. It is the shout of conquest. The moment it leaped from the soul of the dying Christ the harps of heaven were struck as they were never struck before, and the outburst of a new song of praise to God shook the very pillars of the throne. That shout is still thrilling down the ages, and the soul that hears it answers it with the counter shout of the inspired Paul, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." This cry tells us of a work given Jesus to do upon the part of the Godhead, and it proclaims that this work was done. The work given was the purchase of our redemption. "It is finished." What is finished? The objective work which pertains to redemption;

the fulfilment of the law; the realization of the prophecies which promise a complete and all-satisfactory sacrifice for sin; the Levitical ritual with its pictorial act, typifying Calvary; the sentence written against the sinner; all the demands of God's righteousness; everything needed to make salvation a fact. The old divines used to say that magnificent visions burst in upon the soul of Jesus Christ when he uttered this cry. He saw all the results of his death: the wonderful display of God's glory, the delight of the Father in him, the ten thousand times ten thousand redeemed, and the coming eternity with its fulness. If the cry of abandonment was the saddest cry that ever pierced the air, this cry of triumph was the grandest cry that ever rang out in the universe. Church of God, this is the cry for the age and for the hour. Take it up and carry it to the uttermost parts of the earth. Declare everywhere that redemption is finished and that it is offered to all. Tell the nations that all that is demanded of man is simply this: a trustful acceptance of Christ and his completed work.

The seventh saying is the one with which Christ closes his sacrificial life, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

We could not do without these seven sayings of the cross. They are an integral part of the history of the crucifixion of Jesus. They give us an insight into what the crucifixion was and into its design. They are Christ's exposition of his own nature and Christ's interpretation of his own cross.

3. *Jesus, while he hung upon the cross, suffered unwonted mental agony.*

We have noticed the agony which came to Christ from the divine desertion, and need say nothing more upon it as a source of mental suffering; but we must say something upon the agony which was caused by the actions of men. All manner of indignity was heaped upon him, and this gave him mental pain. He was treated far worse than the heathen treated their criminals. When Socrates died the words of loving friends fell upon his ears. His executioner handed him the cup of poison with tears in his eyes. Jesus heard nothing but jeers and cruel mockings. When Aristides the Just was executed they had to search Athens through and through before they could find a man who would consent to spit in his face in the name of the State, and in this way put him under public contempt; but men unbidden, and in defiance of the laws of the State, spat in the face of Jesus. Rude men struck him and buffeted him; the crowds jeered him; the soldiers mocked him; the chief priests and rulers of the Jews reviled him. Christ was reviled and mocked in all his offices. All this went to his heart and caused him untold agony. It gave reality to those words which prophecy put into his lips, "Reproach hath broken my heart."

The reason I present this conduct of man and quote these words of Christ, "Reproach hath broken my heart," is that I may speak a word about the modern theory as to the physical cause of the

death of Christ. The quickness of his death was a marvel. It was an exception among the crucified. Death by crucifixion usually took days. Can the quickness of Christ's death be explained? That is the question. This is the explanation offered; it was never offered prior to the nineteenth century: He died, not from the wounds in his hands and feet, but from the rupture of his heart. This rupture was caused by mental passion and grief. "Reproach hath broken my heart." Death from this cause would harmonize with his agony in Gethsemane, where he sweat great drops of blood and where his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death.

Many cases are known to physicians where grief and strong emotion have broken the heart and caused instant death. A son strikes his mother with all his might in the face, and she actually dies under the stroke. It is not the physical blow that kills her. No; it is the anguish that comes from the thought that it was her own child who struck the cruel blow. Post-mortem examination in the cases of some who die from grief shows that the heart is literally ruptured, and that the blood flowing through the fissure fills the sac in which the heart is incased and by its pressure stops the action of the heart.

But there was no post-mortem operation performed upon the body of Christ to discover the cause of his death. Yes, there was: one of the soldiers acted as the dissecting surgeon and anatomist. With his spear he pierced the side of Christ.

This spear, acting as a surgeon's lance, revealed that in the case of Jesus there happened the same thing which happens when men die from a heart-break caused by grief. John records this fact: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

This view of the physical cause of Christ's death clearly demonstrates that it was sin that killed Christ. He died, not so much from the nails driven through his body, nor from the bitter feeling and the evil thought which were in the blows that drove the nails and made them pierce him, but under the awful load of the world's guilt, for "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

THE DEDUCTIONS.

1. *The cross is the power of God for exposing sin and for subduing the sinful heart.*

What will sin do? Show us this and you give us the best exposition of sin. This gospel story tells us that sin crucified the Son of God. It could do nothing beyond that. Ring the changes upon that horrible act if you would keep sin before you in its true character and if you would guard yourselves against the deceptions of the human heart. When the world dignifies sin with soft and euphonious names, when the world makes sin popular by making it fashionable, do you keep repeating to your heart this fact, "Sin crucified the Son of God."

But the cross, as we have said, is God's power

for subduing the sinful heart. The subduing power of the fact that we crucified Christ, our best Friend, may be illustrated by an incident which Bronson Alcott relates as having taken place in his school. He made it a law that all offences should be punished, in order that the authority of the school might be kept inviolate. The punishment of offences he decreed should be borne by himself. He intended to put every offending scholar under the power of this thought, "I made my friend and teacher suffer." So much for the law of the school; let us see how it worked. Mr. Alcott gives us this instance: "One day I called before me a pupil eight or ten years of age who had violated an important regulation of the school. All the pupils were looking on, and they knew what the rule of the school was. I put the ruler into the hand of the offending pupil and extended my hand. I bade him strike. The instant the boy saw my extended hand and heard my command to strike I saw a struggle begin in his face. A light sprang up in his countenance. A new set of shuttles seemed to be weaving a new nature within him. I kept my hand extended. The school was in tears. The boy struck once, and he himself burst into tears. I constantly watched his face, and he seemed in a bath of fire which was giving him a new nature. He had a different mood towards the school and towards the violated law. The boy seemed transformed by the idea that I should take chastisement in the place of his punishment. He went back to his seat, and ever

after he was one of the most docile of the pupils, although at first he had been one of the rudest." Oh the sight of Christ suffering for us! When we see this sight aright, the words of God are fulfilled in us: "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn."

2. *The cross gives us a standing exhibition of the way in which some men treat Christ.*

I wish to speak especially of the soldiers at the cross, who are an ancient type of a modern class. They gamble for the seamless robe of Christ. To them the garments of Christ were everything, but Christ himself was nothing. They prize the garments but despise Christ. They forget that had there been no Christ there would have been no seamless robe to appropriate and enjoy. The robe without Christ had a certain value, true; but with a living Christ within it, it was infinitely more valuable. When Christ was within the robe it had healing virtue, but when Christ was crucified it had no healing, life-giving power whatever.

There are multitudes to-day who are like these soldiers. For example, there are crowds of citizens in this republic who glory in the civil rights which our national fathers bequeathed, but they hate and crucify the Christ of our fathers. It was under the inspiration of Christ that our fathers sacrificed and fought for the rights which they bequeathed. If there had been no Christ there would have been no Plymouth Rock Pilgrims in Massachusetts, no Covenanters in the Carolinas, no Huguenots in New Jersey, and no Hollanders

in New York. Without the Plymouth Rock Pilgrims and the Covenanters and the Huguenots and the Hollanders there would have been no Revolutionary War. If there had been no Revolutionary War there would have been no Republic of the United States. There is no fact more patent in history than this: American freedom owes its origin to Christ. Yet there are Americans by the thousand who would take the freedom and crucify the Christ. But what is freedom dissociated from Christ? What is it worth in comparison with the freedom which throbs with the life of Christ? Freedom, when it is a robe with the living Christ in it, will cure and keep in life the nations which touch its hem; but freedom, when it is a robe torn from Christ, will let the nations die even while they handle it, own it, and boast about it. We needed Christ to procure our liberty, and we need Christ to secure our liberty.

3. *The cross with its sacrifice for sin opens up to us the only way of salvation.*

"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." "There is no other way under heaven whereby we can be saved." In the plan of redemption the sufferings of Christ are essential. This Book of God, which teaches the way of life, knows nothing save Christ Jesus and him crucified. The cross is the centre of the Bible. The cross is first in prophecy and symbol and type and Gospel and Epistle and Apocalypse. When men ask you, Why do you expect to be saved? do not tell them that you are striving to live by the precepts

of the Saviour, and therefore expect God to accept of you because of your obedience. If this were the right thing to say, if you could be saved in this way, then Christ Jesus might have stepped back into heaven the moment he preached the Sermon on the Mount. Then Christ might have turned his back on Calvary with its cross. No. Tell them that you are trusting in the sacrifice which Christ offered on the cross and in the death which he died on Calvary. That man only is safe who with the eye of faith can look up into the face of the crucified Christ and say,

“Simply to thy cross I cling.”

CHRIST RISEN.

"MARY MAGDALENE CAME AND TOLD THE DISCIPLES THAT SHE HAD SEEN THE LORD."—*John* 20:18.

JOHN'S Gospel closes its narrative of the earthly life of Jesus Christ with the story of his resurrection. It is a living Christ that looks out of its last page. When we have finished reading this Gospel, the picture which we take with us is the thrilling picture of the empty tomb and the Shechina chariot passing out of human sight into the world above. How else could the biography of Jesus end? There must be a fitness in things. But no other *finale* would answer the fitness of things. It would never do to end the gospel story with Jesus writhing under the scourge or with Jesus agonizing on the cross or with Jesus pale and dead in the tomb. That would cause the world to close the Book of his biography with a chill of horror and not with a thrill of joy. The story of the Christ must end as magnificently as it began, or else there will be a mis-match. On the first page of his biography is the miracle of the Incarnation, with the singing angels and the flashing glory; on the last page of his biography there must be the miracle of the Resurrection and the angels guarding the empty tomb and the dawning twilight of the Ascension splendor. The book of the Gospel must close with a picture of

the living Christ. The fitness of things demands this. The interest of the kingdom of Christ demands this, for only such a Christ can take hold of men, enter their lives, and keep them loyal to his authority.

In treating the resurrection of Christ we are oppressed with a sense of its tremendous importance. No fact excels it. No fact carries so much in it. Christianity stands or falls with it. Risen, or not risen? that is the question. If Christ be not risen, then his character is a wreck, and a wreck from which it is impossible to save anything of any value. What would be said of a modern teacher or leader who encouraged men to give up all their prospects in life upon the strength of promises which were never to be realized, and which he knew would never be realized? Such a leader is the unrisen Christ. If Christ be not risen, then Christianity has been propagating a lie in the name of the God of truth, then the three hundred million Christians on the globe who believe that he is alive have been following a mere fancy, a baseless fiction, a nonentity, a deception. They have been mocked in the very highest attributes of their nature. If Christ be not risen, then there is nothing left of that beautiful Christ-story and that wonderful Christ-kingdom save shadows of failure and ashes of disappointment.

But if Christ be risen, what then? Then Christianity is divine and true, and everything that conflicts with Christianity is human and false. Then Jesus of Nazareth is what he claimed to be,

the Son of God. Then redemption on Calvary is a glorious reality. Then life beyond the grave is a fact. Then the sanctity of the Perfect Man is unassailable. Then the coming triumph of goodness is certain and indisputable. Risen, or not risen? that is the question of all questions. In dealing with the question we take this position: The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a historical fact, and as such it is substantiated by infallible proofs. It needs clear and strong evidence in order to beget clear and strong faith. It is an easy thing to establish a fact. All that is necessary is the testimony of eye-witnesses. We deal with and establish facts every day. Most of the facts with which we deal and upon which we act are unseen to us. They are established by the testimony of others.

Let me resort to illustration: We believe that eighty years before the resurrection of Christ, Julius Cæsar, with two Roman legions, landed in England on the coast of Kent. No one thinks of doubting that. If eternal salvation depended on believing it, every student of history would be certain of heaven. Yet the actual historic proof of this is far less complete and cogent and convincing than is the proof that Christ died and rose again. Men believe without any doubt or difficulty in the Sabine farm of Horace where his friends quaffed the Falernian wine. We believe that Virgil died on a journey and that he lies buried, at his own request, at the second milestone from Naples on the Puteolan way. I have

in my possession a leaf which grew upon his grave, plucked by a sister's hand on her journey to Syria and sent to me as a remembrancer. We believe in the plough of Cincinnatus and in the poison-cup of Socrates.

To come a little nearer home and into our own age: we believe that there is such a thing as the Declaration of Independence. Why? Because George Washington and Thomas Jefferson and John Adams and their contemporaries have said so. Because, when we were born, we found our fathers celebrating the Fourth of July as a memorial of the fact. We believe that there is such a city as Rome. Why? Because those who have seen that city declare that it does exist. Our conviction as to its existence could not be firmer though we travelled the seven hills, explored the crumbling Coliseum, and looked upon the forum where Tully thundered and Cæsar stood. Just as we have come to a belief in the Declaration of Independence and in the existence of Rome, so we may come to a belief in the fact of Christ's resurrection. No man can deny it without striking a deadly blow at all history.

It is perfectly reasonable to suppose that Christ would make such a stupendous fact easy of establishment. To make it difficult of establishment would be to throw his infinite sacrifice into peril and risk. When he founded his religion Christ said, "My religion shall consist of plain facts which can be seen and handled and attested and which can be submitted to the common laws of

evidence." Acting according to this intention, at the beginning of his public life he chose a company of men who should be with him to hear and see everything, that they might be ready at the right time to give testimony as his witnesses. Nothing could be simpler than this. No method of establishing the facts of his religion could be more effective. It put his cause upon the same basis with all other great historical movements which have influential and unquestioned standing among men. If men are to be consistent with themselves, they must believe the facts concerning Jesus Christ, for the same reason that they believe the facts concerning Napoleon and Washington. We do not make as much of the historical argument in favor of Christianity as we ought. It is simple and strong and irresistible.

"If we think of the gospel as a set of truths, spiritual, moral, intellectual, then the way to prove the gospel is to show the consistency of that body of truths with one another, their consistency with other truths, their derivation from admitted principles, their reasonableness, their adaptation to man's nature, and thus on. But if we think of the gospel as being first a set of historical facts, facts which carry the doctrines in themselves, then the way to establish the gospel is the same as that by which you would establish any other fact, viz., by the testimony of those who can say, 'We know it to be so, for we saw it!'" Dr. Arnold, a man far famed for his mental power and research, writes: "I have been used for many years to study the

history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidences of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort to the mind of a fair inquirer than the great sign which God has given us, that Christ died and rose again from the dead." There are three lines of argument upon which I wish to dwell.

1. *As a historical fact the resurrection of Christ is established by other facts which grow out of it and which are connected with it. These facts witness to Christ's resurrection.*

Whence this great organization? Where did it get its missionary life? It got it from the words of a resurrected Christ, "Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel." What gospel does it bring to the world? The gospel of the Resurrection. This is its creed, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10:9.) But what is the Christian Church? It is an organization linked to the days of the apostles by an unbroken history. It is the fruit of Christ's resurrection. It stands related to Christ's resurrection just as this Republic stands related to the patriotism of the Revolutionary heroes.

The Christian Sabbath is a witnessing fact. The Christian Sabbath was not the original Sabbath. The Jews in our midst with their seventh-day Sabbath are the proof of this. By their sev-

enth day Sabbath-keeping they are raising the question from pole to pole, "Why do the Jews and Christians keep a different Sabbath? They are unwilling witnesses to Christ, but witnesses. The answer to this question brings out the history of the Christian Sabbath. This is its history: The Christian Sabbath is kept as a memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and as such it dates back to the apostles who saw the risen One. Such was the firm faith of the early universal Christian Church in the resurrection of Christ that, with one consent, they set apart the first day of the week to celebrate the fact. As the continuity of the Christian Sabbath for nineteen centuries is a fact of history which is undeniable, the Christian Sabbath stands before us as God's great monument upon which is inscribed the faith of these long centuries. In the Christian Sabbaths which have blessed the earth we have a grand chain of time which is made out of the links of weeks. Taking hold of the last-formed link and throwing our might into one long, strong, testing pull, we can feel the rebound which tells us that the far-away first link is securely fastened to an eternal reality. I would as soon doubt the fact commemorated by the Fourth of July as doubt the fact commemorated by the Lord's Day.

2. As a historical fact the resurrection of Christ is established by the testimony of competent witnesses.

Our source of information and authority is the New Testament. This Book introduces us to the witnesses and furnishes us with a copy of their

testimony. According to the New Testament there are two classes of witnesses, viz., Christ's enemies and Christ's friends. It is important to notice that there are some things which are admitted by both classes. They agree upon three things at least: First, that Jesus Christ was dead. Second, that Jesus Christ was buried in the tomb of Joseph, which was closed with a great stone, was sealed with the Roman seal, and was guarded by a Roman guard. Third, that on the morning of the third day the tomb was empty.

The enemies of Christ had every reason and motive to account for the empty tomb and to explain it to the dishonor of Christ. The very same hate and envy that surrounded the cross surrounded the tomb. Nevertheless we are bound candidly to listen to what these enemies say. How do they account for the empty tomb? They persuaded the Roman soldiers to say, "While we slept the disciples of Jesus came and stole his body away." They paid the soldiers large sums for this testimony. Would they make such a use of money? They would. They had already bought Judas Iscariot with money. But why should the soldiers be paid for telling the truth? Look at their story! It falls to pieces of itself. It is confessedly the testimony of sleeping men. "While we slept his disciples came and stole his body." They saw nothing. They were asleep. They heard nothing. They were asleep. As sleeping men, they were dead to everything transpiring. To admit that they slept was to admit

that they knew nothing, and were therefore incompetent. Their testimony was only a conjecture, but conjecture is not evidence. No court of law will allow facts to be buried by theories and conjectures. Conjectures and theories are all that the enemies of Christ have produced. Men and brethren, this story which falls to pieces of itself is the best story that the enemies of Christ have ever gotten up as an explanation of the empty tomb.

It has been said by the enemies of Christ that the witnesses of the resurrection deliberately bore false testimony, in order to deceive the world. That is no better than the soldiers' story, because there was no possible or conceivable motive to induce the disciples of Jesus to deceive the world. If Christ rose not, they were deceived themselves, and it would have been human nature for them to brand their cruel deceiver with infamy instead of glorifying him by the proclamation that he had risen. It is not human nature to treat deceivers as though they were saints. But mark what the disciples met with because they proclaimed the resurrection of Christ! They were persecuted by those who crucified Christ. They were scourged and stoned and exiled. Are these the things which tempt men to become impostors?

Besides all this, we must keep before us the results which the fact of Christ's resurrection worked in these witnesses. It lifted them out of their old selves and made them new men. They rose to higher faith and higher work. They gave

the world its purest doctrines and principles and ideals. Their raised character is a proof of the raised Christ. The tree of falsehood has never grown such lives as the after-lives of the witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When the theory of deception fails to smother the great fact, it is suggested that perhaps the witnesses of the resurrection were true in themselves, but labored under a delusion. Perhaps their intense desire to have Christ rise from the dead led them to imagine that they saw him. There is more modesty in this theory. But it does not fit the facts any more than the former theory. The resurrection had no place in the thoughts of the disciples prior to the time when it took place. They refused to believe it when it was first announced. They had forgotten all that Christ had said about it. It is true that his wonderful life ought to have kept them from forgetting; but it did not. His very miracles made his death all the more crushing. The disciples reasoned that if he could have prevented his death he would have done so, but his power gave out. True, he claimed that it was his arm that upheld the universe, but they saw that arm stark and stiff, and that neutralized his claim. To the disciples the death of Christ contradicted everything that went before. It left them panic-stricken and in grief. To show us that the disciples were not looking for the resurrection of Jesus, and that they believed only when strong evidence was presented, we have such incidents as those recorded of Peter and John. When

word was brought them that the tomb of Christ was empty, they did not say, "That is what we expected, for he is risen." No. They could not believe that the grave was untenanted, and they ran to the sepulchre to see for themselves. The trueness of this story shines out in every part. John is John, and Peter is Peter. They act themselves, and the details which seem unnecessary to the casual reader bring this out and stamp the story as genuine. According to this story, John was the first to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. He was the disciple of love, and love sees farthest and quickest. How was he led to faith? He tells us himself. He was led to faith by what he saw in the empty tomb. He saw the grave-clothes folded and orderly arranged, the linen in one place and the napkin in another. That was what arrested his attention and occupied his thought and led him to the conclusion that Christ had risen. He reasoned that here was the evidence of deliberation, leisure, calmness, and perfect freedom. There was no robbery, for the signs of robbery are confusion and disorder. Foes did not take the body away, for they would not have taken such care; but here are the evidences of care. Friends did not, for the soldiers were here to keep off friends. Besides the body was in the tomb of a friend and could not be in a better place. Then what does all this mean? As he mused, the explanation came to him. He remembered the words of Christ about rising on the third day, and there and then in the empty sepulchre he believed. These are his own

words: "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed!" He did not need to wait to look upon Christ. He was the very opposite of Thomas. That beatitude which Christ pronounced in the hearing of Thomas was his: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed!"

Take up a second story, namely, that of Mary. To her the empty tomb meant the body hurried away in dishonor. This was the cause of her grief. If she is ever to believe in a risen Christ, she must see him. Christ knows this, and so shows himself to her. He came to her and called her by name, and she knew him by his voice, for it rang with the old notes of love. This was the way this witness was convinced. It was different from the way any other witness was convinced. The witnesses of the resurrection were convinced according to their nature and disposition, and so the proof comes to us along all manner of lines. To Mary was granted the first appearance, because of the intensity of her love. The first honor was placed upon the first grace, the crowning grace of the Christian life.

With this story of Mary before me I ask myself, What is the proof which the New Testament gives us of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Out of the story comes the answer: The proof which the New Testament gives us of the resurrection of Christ is the living Christ himself and his post-resurrection life. We are told nothing as to how

he rose, but we are introduced to him as risen. If we had the details of the process of his resurrection, our thoughts would run off on a hundred non-important and non-essential lines. The New Testament hides out of our sight all non-essentials. It sets before us the risen Christ. What more do we need? Allow me an illustration. You want to prove, for example, that the little black seed can rise out of its present inactive, cold, and death-locked form, and become a living force, producing flowers robed with beauty and filled with fragrance. What would be the most effective way of establishing this? Would you take up time in telling of germination and of the way trunk and leaf are built up? No. There is a more effective way than that. Bring forward the full-formed flower and let it fill the atmosphere with its fragrance. The flower, beautiful and golden-tinted and symmetrical, the flower, delightful with its fragrance—this is the best proof. It is proof not only that the little black seed can rise into life, but it is proof also that the little black seed has risen into life and has exchanged its blackness for beauty.

Among the witnesses who testified that they had seen the risen Christ were persons who had all manner of experiences with him and all manner of opportunity for testing his identity. The proofs afforded them were infallible. They walked with him, looked him in the face, handled him, examined the scars of crucifixion, ate with him, talked with him. Who were granted these privileges? His mother, his comrades of childhood, the men

who had been with him night and day for three years, his chosen apostles. These were the people who knew Christ best. These people could not be deceived. If it be possible to believe any company of people, it is possible to believe them. They bore their testimony in the very place where Christ died and on the very day he rose. They proclaimed his resurrection to his enemies, and three thousand of his crucifiers, who had ample opportunity to look into all the facts, in a single day came out and confessed their faith in Christ as risen.

3. *As a historical fact the resurrection of Christ rests upon an authenticated record of sufficient evidence.*

Conclusive as is the testimony presented, still there is one question more suggested, and I think it only right to deal with it. It is this: Have we a true record? Are these the facts in the case? Can the genuineness and credibility of the gospel narrative be proven? This is a vital question. If the New Testament cannot be authenticated, then everything falls to the ground; but if it can be authenticated, then everything stands. Let me say in dealing with this question that the claims of no book have been more thoroughly sifted than the claims of this Book. The desire to sift it has given rise in modern times to a new science: the science of Hermeneutics. The sifting goes on, and out of the sifting comes new confirmation. The old divines tell us, by way of confirming the New Testament account of Christ's resurrection, that there was a public debate in the Roman Senate upon the

proposal to receive Jesus as one of the gods of Rome, and that the fact of his resurrection was used as an argument. They tell us also that in "The Acts of Pilate," filed away in the archives of Rome, there was a direct reference to the resurrection of Jesus, and that Tertullian appealed to this record while it was in existence. Interesting as these things are, they are fragmentary, and we will not build upon them. We admit that we do not have the autograph copy of the New Testament. The Book as we now have it was collated in the course of long years. Part was found here and part there, one tract in one country and another tract in another country. Fragment was found by this man, and fragment by that man. What a marvellous history! But does not this invalidate the Book? Modern research answers the question, and shows us that God never let the Book out of his hand. During our lifetime the two oldest and fullest manuscripts of the New Testament have been found in old convents. These manuscripts are known as the Vatican and Sinaitic. These were written as far back as A. D. 325. When we compare our collated New Testament with these copies, what does the comparison show? This, namely, there is not enough difference to change a single doctrine. That certainly is marvellous. But there are three hundred years between the writing of these manuscripts and the time of Christ. Can these three hundred years be bridged? Happily, yes. Fortunately these three centuries abound in Christian writers, and the works of

many of these writers stand upon the shelves of our libraries to-day. I have handled them with my own hands. In these extant works there are multitudinous quotations from the New Testament accompanied with comments and expositions. From these it is possible to collect the greater part of the New Testament. These quotations prove that the New Testament was written when it is claimed that it was written.

To specify by way of example : We have the writings of Clement, the friend and companion of Paul. If the writings of Paul were blotted out, we could get the Pauline doctrines from him. Clement died A. D. 102.

For example, we have the writings of Polycarp, the disciple of John : these give us the teachings of John. These early fathers whose writings we have connect us with the apostles, and the apostles take us right back to Jesus.

Now from all this we see that the authenticity of no book is more clearly established than the authenticity of the New Testament. It is an authenticated New Testament that brings to us the infallible proofs, the indisputable evidence, of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

VALUE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

There is no fact so mighty as a spiritual power. It begets a resurrection within us. It gives us a new sense of the largeness of life. It starts spiritual possibilities leaping in the soul. It bridges earth and heaven and brings over to earth the vital-

ity of heaven. It roots our life in the risen Christ and puts the fulness of heaven at our disposal.

In a Scottish valley, beside a little brook, where there was no kindly soil, a Highlander once planted a tree. Of course it wilted and drooped. But suddenly, to the surprise of every one, it took a new start in life, and bore rich fruit. What was the source of its new life? That was the query put by all who knew it. An examination revealed the secret. With a marvellous vegetable instinct, it sent out a shoot which ran along and over a narrow sheep-bridge and rooted itself in the rich loam on the other side of the brook. From this rich loam it drew its new life. Even so the resurrection of Jesus bridges the river of death that flows between earth and heaven, and the souls of men who see this and know this send out the shoot of faith, and this running over the bridge roots itself in the eternal realities beyond and draws spiritual life from the very fulness of God.

THE RISEN CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.

"THIS IS NOW THE THIRD TIME THAT JESUS SHOWED HIMSELF TO HIS DISCIPLES AFTER THAT HE WAS RISEN FROM THE DEAD."—

John 21:14.

THERE is no part of the biography of the Christ more important than the period of the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. It was an introduction to the New Dispensation, for Jesus spent it in "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." It was a season of preparation to Jesus for his return to heaven, when the everlasting gates were to open and allow the King of glory entrance. It was a time of large instruction to the disciples. Hitherto they had been unprepared for the things now revealed. It was the prelude to the wonderful things of Pentecost. Let no one overlook the riches of this portion of our Lord's life or the number of important facts and doctrines and principles brought to view during these interviews. By his appearance to his disciples the Master demonstrated that he was the same unchanged Jesus, loving and forgiving and sympathizing as in the old days.

No part of the history of THE FORTY DAYS is more interesting than this chapter which records Christ's third appearance to his associated disciples. Four times he had appeared to separate disciples; this was the *third* time he appeared to the disciples in a company.

The leading apostolic figure in this epiphany is Peter, and the leading fact is his restoration by the Master to apostolic work. All else recorded is incidental. The lessons of the chapter centre around his reinstallation.

Bible critics call this twenty-first chapter of John a postscript to his Gospel. It has been said that the aged John was in the habit of telling the interesting story which it contains, and that his disciples, who were charmed by it, urged him to add it to his Gospel, that all the ages might have it and be blessed through it. Postscript or no postscript, the chapter fits the Gospel and makes a grand ending. Now that we have it we do not see how we could do without it. There would be a mysterious gap if it were not here. It is a bridge from Peter of the denial to Peter of Pentecost. We must be told of the restoration of the fallen Peter and of his reinstatement in the apostolate in order that we may understand why he should hold the confidence of his fellow-apostles and lead them in the march of the cross. The denier of Christ—the leader of the cause of Christ! This must be explained. This story explains it. The man who renounced Christ and his cause is back in his old place because Christ sought him and reclaimed him and forgave him and restored him. Christ came to seek and save the lost, to give man a knowledge of himself as a sinner, to call man to repentance, to purchase for man and give to him a pardon for sin, to lift him into a life of fellowship with God, and to induct him into divine ser-

vice. This was the grand purpose of Christ's whole life. This is the explanation of Christ's whole biography. Now what more fitting than that the history of his life should close with a striking illustration of a man who was revealed to himself, who was convicted of sin, who was pardoned and saved, who was brought into intimate and loving association with God, and whose life was consecrated to daring and magnificent gospel work?

While the story told by the chapter centres in Peter, it also centres in Christ. While it lifts before us the sin of man, it lifts before us also and chiefly the glory of God. The sin of man is but the black background which sets off the brilliant looming and flashing of the sublime attribute of God's mercy. The blacker the cloud the more distinct and beautiful is the sheen of the rainbow. The blacker human iniquity is, the more clearly is it seen "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." The special design of this Gospel according to John is to let us see the outshining of God in Christ. As the Gospel of Luke is the Gospel of his humanity, this is the Gospel of his deity. All through his life John shows us that Jesus Christ lives like God, thinks like God, speaks like God, loves like God; now in closing his Gospel he records an incident which shows us that he forgives like God. Divine attribute after divine attribute reveals itself in him—omniscience, ubiquity of power, omnipotence, truth; now the divine attribute of infinite mercy reveals itself in pardoning

the great sin of Peter, and thus once more it is made plain that Jesus Christ is God.

Is there a grander attribute with which to close the gospel of the deity of Christ than the divine attribute of mercy? This story of the exercise of divine mercy with which this Gospel closes matches the song of the angels which opened the life of Christ, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." It matches every great and grand thing found on the Gospel page. For example, it matches the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son. Who could be worse than the Prodigal? But what reception could be more hearty than the reception which he received? Sin cannot outmatch abounding grace. What case could be worse than Peter's? Oh what a fall was his! One hour he was a holy apostle, the next hour he was a blaspheming sinner. But Christ received him back from his apostasy and gave him a pardon and an office and a work and a promise of glory. In doing this he lifted the story of the Prodigal Son out of its parabolic form and translated it into an actuality of history. For example, it matches that wonderful commission which Christ gave his disciples: "Go ye into all the world and preach salvation in my name; and *begin at Jerusalem.*" "*Begin at Jerusalem.*" The Jerusalem sinners were types of the worst sinners. Just as Peter, the greatest sinner among the apostles who had forsaken Christ, was chosen first, the Jerusalem sinners, who murdered Christ, were chosen first. "*Begin at Jerusalem.*" It is as if he said,

“Go find the men who said, ‘Crucify him,’ and tell them that, if they will it, they may take up the cry of adoration which is the joy of those around the throne. Go find the men who placed the crown of thorns upon my brow and drove its sharp points into my temples, and tell them that I will give them crowns of glory if they will but accept of them. Go find the soldiers who drove the nails and handled the spear, and tell them that I offer the blood which they shed for the washing away of their sins. Go find the scribes and elders who pleaded against me and secured my sentence, and tell them that I offer myself as their advocate at the dread bar of God, and that I will deliver them from condemnation if they will only accept of me. In searching up Peter and bringing him to pardon and privilege Christ gave his disciples an example of the way the great commission was to be executed. “God’s mercy is above all his works.” This is the fact upon which the Gospel of the deity of Christ rings the changes by this incident which fills its last page. Publicans and sinners, denying Peters and persecuting Pauls, there is hope in Christ for all of these, for in Christ there is the outshining of divine mercy. “God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”

The story before us is not that of Peter’s restoration to Christ’s favor, it is that of his restoration to apostolic office and work. The restoration to Christ’s favor took place prior to this. There were some things which antedated this history. The look which Christ gave Peter antedated this; that

look brought Peter to penitence. Before this there was a secret meeting between Christ and Peter, and a special invitation was sent Peter calling him to this meeting. The secret meeting was the meeting for the two hearts, the heart of Christ and the heart of Peter, to be set right with each other. The secret meeting took place on the very day of Christ's resurrection. When the two disciples returned from Emmaus to Jerusalem, to tell of their experience with Christ, the Jerusalem brethren all cried to them, before they could speak a word, "The Lord is risen and hath appeared unto Peter!" In summing up the evidences of Christ's resurrection, Paul, long years afterwards, referred to it: "He was seen of Cephas." Personally, and prior to this, it was all right between Peter and Christ. This meeting was to rectify all things officially. If Peter had not personally been received by Christ prior to this, he would not have sprung out of the boat to meet Christ the moment John said, "It is the Lord!"

The scene of the restoration was located by the Sea of Galilee. This was a place of precious memories to the disciples. It had been purposely chosen for this meeting, and the disciples had been directed both by Christ and the angel at the tomb to gather here. A place like this, which was crowded with associations related to Christ, would make him all the more real to his disciples. Besides, this was the place where Christ first inducted Peter into the apostolic office, and it was calculated to bring up old memories to Peter, and make the

reinstatement more impressive. A great many Bible critics, ancient and modern, interpret this chapter symbolically, and thus give it a wide scope and make it vivid. For example, they make the fire on the shore a symbol of Christ's sacrifice. The fire makes the fish acceptable as food; even so Christ's sacrifice makes us acceptable to God. There were two instalments of fish cooked: the fish which Christ cooked before the disciples came to land, and the fish which the disciples caught. The first they make symbolical of the saints saved under the Old Testament, the second the saints saved under the New Testament dispensation. There were one hundred and fifty-three fish caught in the wonderful draught. There were only one hundred and fifty-three species of fish then known; the number therefore indicates that under this dispensation people from every kindred and tongue and nation shall be saved. The meal prepared is construed into a symbol of the marriage supper of the Lamb and of the eternal refreshment which God will provide for all who labor for him here. This manner of interpretation makes the chapter very full and picturesque, and gives an opportunity to emphasize facts elsewhere taught, but it seems to me that it scatters the force of the chapter, and obscures the great fact of Peter's restoration and the grand lessons which it carries and illustrates. I believe that everything here is vocal: the place itself, all the incidents which transpire, and all the striking things which are noted; but I believe that all these voices singly and combined talk to Peter

and about Peter. There was a fire burning at the restoration; there was a fire burning at the denial. It was at "a fire of coals" that Peter said, "I never knew him;" it was at "a fire of coals" that Peter said, "I love him." A meal preceded the restoration, a meal preceded the denial. Peter went out from the Lord's Supper to the denial of his Master. There was a miraculous draught of fishes at the restoration; there was a miraculous draught of fishes, after a night of fruitless toil, when Peter was first called to the office of an apostle. Three times Peter was made to confess Christ; three times he had denied Christ. Three times Christ re-commissioned him; three times he had forfeited his commission. Christ questioned Peter until he acknowledged his divinity by saying, "Lord, thou knowest all things." Before his first commission Peter acknowledged Christ's divinity. Jesus called him Simon, and not Peter, for that was his name before he became an apostle. Everything was arranged so that Peter was taken back to the beginning and to his sin. Thus he was taught that he had made a wreck of his life by his fall. It was necessary for him to begin over again. It was necessary for Christ to re-make him, and re-commission him. While Peter's past was held before him with an unswerving fidelity, this was most delicately done, and at the same time most thoroughly done. While Peter was made publicly to confess his fault, the method of confession was one which spared the criminal while it impressed him and made sin odious. He confessed his past sin

by confessing his present love and trueness. Christ never minimizes or glosses over sin. He always requires a right state of heart and exposes the heart to itself. He searches man through and through and compels him to read the unread page of his history. He asks probing questions. Yet he does all this in a way that softens the heart of the sinner instead of hardening it. Christ guards against two extremes: he guards against laxity and severity, sentimentality and sternness.

POINTS DEDUCED.

1. *The work of grace is a magnificent work.*

We have many exhibitions of this work. Every soul in the ten thousand times ten thousand before the throne of God is the embodiment and manifestation of grace. Grace is at work in Peter involving and evolving a grand character. No sculptor ever made more out of a rough piece of marble, even when he wrought it into the most superb of angelic forms, than divine grace made out of rough Peter, the fisherman of Galilee. Behold what he was when grace found him! Ignorant, uncouth, profane, carnal in his tastes, and low and vulgar in his ambitions. Behold him under the developments of grace! A man of the highest ambitions, sacrificing self for others, spiritual in his nature, modelling after a perfect pattern, broad in his outlook, filled with heavenly conceptions and with divine truth, swaying multitudes and lifting them above sin, and raising the very dead by his faith in Christ. When grace finishes its work in

Peter his old self is regenerated, purified, sublimated, transfigured.

Grace does a grand work, because it has before it a magnificent model. It aims at making men Christlike. It gives them strength to obey Christ's command, "Follow me." This command is a two-worded compendium of all Christian duty.

Grace does a grand work, because it acts from itself and is self-sufficient. It does not depend for stimulus upon the sinner. If it did it would soon cease to act. It holds on to the sinner despite the sinner's abuse. It perseveres despite the sinner's many falls. It counts nothing a failure. The prodigal may be very bad, but it decrees his return. When men stone the prophets of God, it sends the Son of God. When men crucify the Son of God, it sends the Spirit of God. Our only hope for ourselves and for all whom we seek to restore and reclaim from the power of sin is in the unchanging and almighty grace of God. When we become discouraged with regard to ourselves or with regard to those among whom we labor, because of the desperate wickedness of heart and the amazing outbreking of sin, the only help we can get is by looking up to God and remembering the unchangeable purposes of his almighty grace. The discouraged Moses looked at the sinning Israel and despaired. He said, "It is no use trying further; it is impossible to make anything out of Israel." Just as he was about to abandon them it occurred to him to look up to God to see if there were anything in Him upon which he could build

hope for Israel. He cried to God, "Show me thy glory." And God showed him his glory, and he learned that it was God's glory to forgive and to show mercy. Then Moses said, "If God thus holds on to sinning Israel and forgives, I will hold on to Israel and labor with them." The grace of God does a grand work because there is nothing that can discourage it. It begins anew and works on until it works out its ideal in the soul and life of man.

2. Love to Christ is the only unfailing spring of Christian activity.

Christ tells us that love was the spring of his life, love to the Father; he makes love the spring of our life, love to Him. According to his decree love has been the central principle of every beautiful and holy Christian life. Paul's life was such a life, and he accounts for it by love: "The love of Christ constraineth us." When the surgeons were cutting with their sharp lances into the breast of a wounded French soldier to find the ball, the man opened his eyes and said, "Cut a little deeper and you will find the emperor." Love for Napoleon was the spring of bravery in the French army. If you enter into the inner life of the Christian, down in the deepest depth you will find Jesus Christ and him only. Love for him is the spring of every grace. Love for him has thrown massive cathedrals into the air, has builded asylums and institutions for carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth and for putting the Word of Life into the hands of the dying. When there is no love

for Christ in the church there is no enterprise, no self-sacrifice, no effective work. There is only weakness and coldness and deadness.

There is always something supreme in every man, and that supreme affection makes him like its object. When Christ is the object, the reigning affection makes us like Christ, whose life was built upon love and was spent in doing good. To do the loftiest work we must be animated by the loftiest principle. There is no loftier principle than love to Christ.

No wonder that God has made love the spring of Christian activity. For see what love does in God ; it moves him to give his own Son. It builds heaven for us ; it makes the glorious covenant ; it utters the precious promises. As it works in God so it works in man. It fills him with sympathy and pity and sacrifice. It takes away drudgery and makes work a delight. It consecrates learning and genius and eloquence to the development and uplifting of humanity. Paul portrays the deeds which are the natural outgrowth of love in that psalm-chapter of his which treats of "Faith, Hope, and Charity." Everything negatively grand and everything positively grand grows from it as the variegated flower grows from the seed. We may weave justice and truth and morality into our life, and we may in this way make our life a beautiful structure ; but if love be not supreme in it, our life is simply a dahlia without fragrance. It is an infinite remove from the sweet-scented lily, the praises of which were spoken by Christ.

No wonder God made love the spring of Christian life, for love is an undying grace. True love for Christ is like the silver rill that has been flowing down the mountain-side for centuries. It is unfailing. Is it not time that the little rill had exhausted itself? Exhausted itself? It cannot do that, for it is fed by an inexhaustible spring. The clouds feed the spring, and the ocean itself feeds the clouds. You might as well talk of the ocean exhausting itself as the rill. Christian love is fed from the inexhaustible fulness of God. "We love him because he first loved us." It is therefore as permanent as God. It will work for Christ, no matter how the world treats it. It may be insulted, despised, rejected, persecuted, still it will bless and work and spend itself and see Christ in the poor and needy and see Christ in itself.

3. *Restoration is one of the covenant blessings of the child of God.*

Nothing can be more clearly presented than this. Here it is in actual history in the experience of the apostle Peter. All through the Bible we find it. Samson was restored and given strength to win the crowning victory over the enemies of the Lord. Solomon was restored and allowed to write the story of his wanderings for the warning of men to the end of time. Noah was restored, and the lips that drained the wine-cup uttered the blessing of the covenant. David was restored, and God used him to write the penitential Psalms for the church. So clearly did David understand this doctrine that he offered a wonderful and daring

prayer to God when he was seeking his way back to God. He asked God to so cleanse him that there might be no stain of sin upon him. He asked God to give him His Holy Spirit and to give him back the joys of salvation. He asked for new and grander appointments to work. And David was right. His prayer was put into his heart by the Lord himself. God himself teaches the believer to sing,

“My soul he doth restore again
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Even for his own name's sake.”

Christ taught his disciples that it was their duty to forgive an offending brother until seventy times seven, i. e., without limit. The forgiveness of God cannot be below man's forgiveness. Christ declares that he is the Good Shepherd. Now one important function of the good shepherd is to seek and find and restore the lost sheep. He willingly goes forth on the search, and his voice rings the name of the lost one among the mountains until crag echoes it to crag. There is not a chasm or precipice left unscrutinized. The one lost sheep of the hundred occupies more of his thoughts than the ninety-and-nine that are safe. This is what Jesus says, and this certainly magnifies and makes prominent God's work of restoration.

But is there no danger in preaching this doctrine and in making it prominent? Christ did not think there was, else he would not have done so. The whole mission of the Son of God was restora-

tion. There is a danger that we may not apprehend fully the grand fact that God does restore us when we fall. What then? There is no seeking for restoration and no burning effort to reclaim the fallen. The guilty past becomes an ever-present burden which crushes us and makes progress towards the right and towards God unattainable. The great enemy of souls uses a guilty past to create despair and spiritual paralysis. The story of Peter's restoration is an antidote to despair. The greatest sin which we can commit against God is to despair of his grace. And this greatest sin against God is the greatest injury we can inflict upon ourselves and upon our fellow-men.

But if you preach strongly the doctrine of restoration as one of the blessings of the covenant, is there not danger that you will make sin easy? Christ did not think so, else he would not have preached it as he did. To all who think of using this doctrine for the purpose of writing down the heinousness and bitterness of sin, we say, remember the awful experience of those sinners who were restored. Remember the eyeless sockets of Samson and the years of midnight and the grinding at the mill as a slave and the derision and mocking laughter of enemies. Remember David's days and nights of anguish and the painful after-judgments. Remember Peter's night of bitter weeping and the spasms of fear which seized him. Remember the Prodigal Son. For notwithstanding the kiss and robe and feast, there was always an ever-present sense of that awful waste and

wreck which he made of the first part of his life. There was always a sense of weakness and of dregs. There was not a day of his after-life that he did not say, "Oh what a fool I was!" And he was a fool, and so is every youth in this nineteenth century who acts as he acted.

Recognizing the awfulness of sin, it is ours to rejoice that there is a way open from sin to God, and it is ours to preach to the fallen Peters and point them to the heights of privileges to which God wants to lift them. They may become apostles again. They may enter into their old communion with Christ. They may speak for Christ and write for Christ and die for Christ and be forever with Christ in glory.

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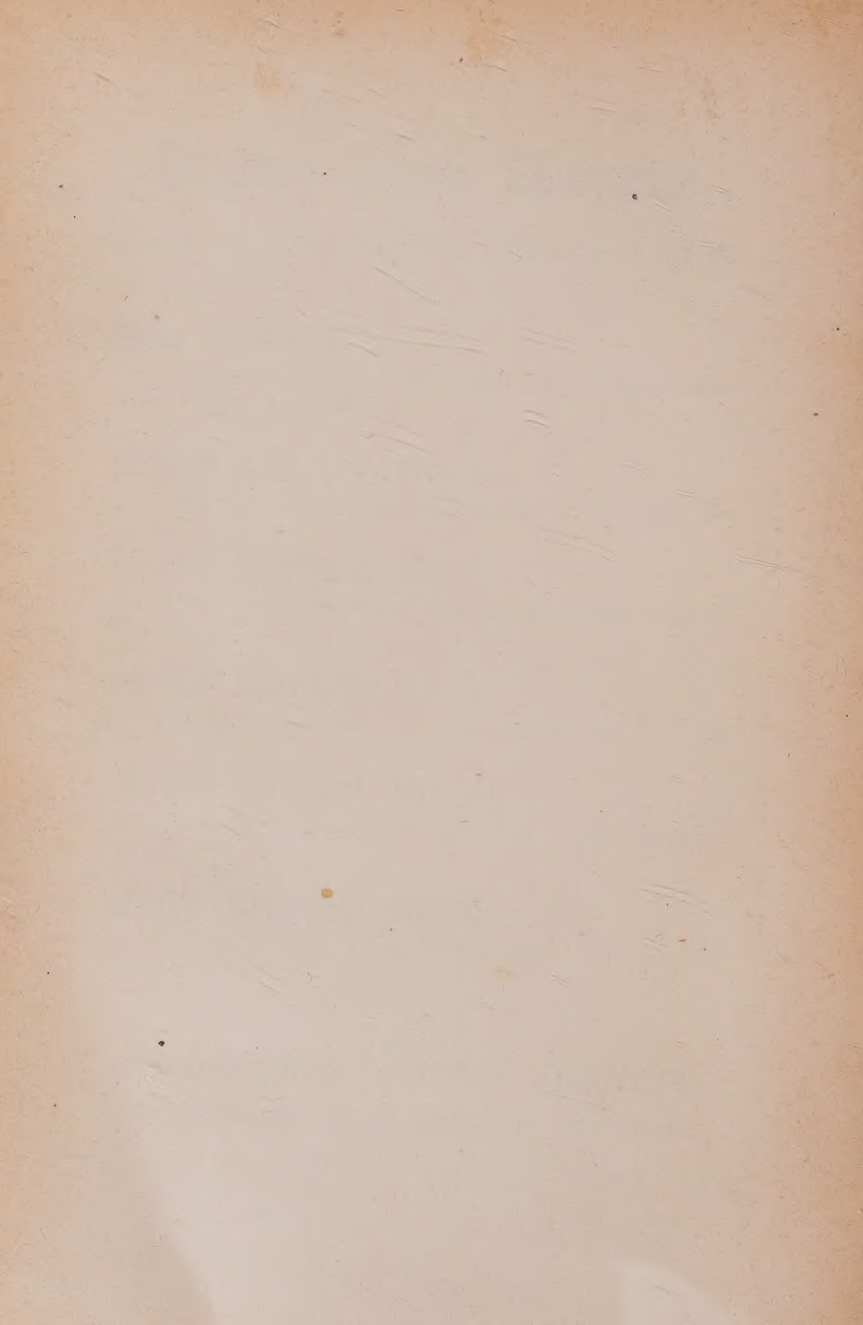
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